

Vermont Film and Media Industry Task Force

Report to the House Committee on Commerce and Economic Development
and to the Senate Committee on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs

ACT 183 Sec. 49

January 15, 2023

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Executive Summary

Vermont's farms and forested landscapes, rugged mountaintops, and cozy villages appeal to many a filmmaker interested in evoking a rural narrative. But as charming as those settings appear, many filmmakers have found they can be duplicated on sound stages or in other locales far afield from the Green Mountain State. The 2016 film *Christmas in Vermont* was shot in four locations in New York state. Netflix's recent hit television series, *Wednesday*, based on the character from *The Addams Family*, takes place at the fictitious Nevermore Academy in Jericho, VT. However, the production is filmed in Romania.

Why do films about Vermont get made outside of Vermont? In the course of the work of the State of Vermont Film and Media Industry Task Force, these were among the frustrations we heard from filmmakers and other film and media industry professionals interested in bolstering Vermont's fledgling industry. Nonetheless, a film that evokes Vermont likely strengthens Vermont's brand whether it's shot here or not.

Many have argued that the chief deterrent to film production in Vermont is the state's lack of tax credits or incentives, which drives production away to states that already offer them. An unprecedented increase in global film production and spending in recent years due to heightened consumer demand for streaming content has created intense competition from film studios, and production incentives have been found to be an effective way for state's to attract jobs and investment in the film industry.¹ Next door in Massachusetts, filmmakers can receive a 25% production credit, a 25% payroll credit, and sales tax exemption. The State of Maine offers a smaller incentive, 5% of expenses incurred for productions over \$75,000. Generally, on average, incentives in states that offer them run between 10 and 30 percent. Determining return on investment with some degree of certainty, however, is difficult. Overall, for states with incentive programs, the consensus is that the incentives do not directly pay for themselves when measured purely in terms of tax revenue, but a case could be made for them as having a positive impact on employment, economic activity, and tourism.

According to Task Force listening sessions and stakeholder interviews, in addition to tax incentives, other crucial ingredients to growing a successful film economy are establishing a centralized film office; creating a robust database of film professionals, equipment, venues, locations, and other resources; and growing and retaining local talent by supporting the abundant film and media education and technical training programs already established in the state. Many students leave Vermont because job opportunities are better in other states with established film offices.

Like our agriculture, tourism, and tech sectors, Vermont's film and media industry sector presents a tremendous economic opportunity for the state if properly nurtured and supported. Whatever the approach to supporting it, the mechanism must be uniquely Vermont and not duplicative of other states

¹ Motion Picture Association, Production Incentives as an Economic Development Tool.
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1rmiidKY-ExyZ6fAFO-aC6EoNmSbIV814y/view?usp=sharing>

with larger corporate tax bases. Vermont's strengths are its small and nimble size, its sizable creative workforce (higher than the national average)², and its internationally known brand.

Through our research, what was underscored is that investing in the film economy in Vermont takes time and resources. At least five years was the recommended length of time for a film office to get properly established and for return on investment to see fruition. Many states with production incentives have them sunset after five years, which gives time to assess their efficacy and make needed adjustments.

Introduction

Vermont has an important but little known historical connection to the birth of cinema. In 1903, the world famous Lumière brothers of France, widely credited as the creators of cinema, built their only other factory outside of France in Burlington, in the current Burlington Beer building on Flynn Avenue. There they would refine their pioneering photography process using specialty dyes made in Burlington to develop color film.³

Today some wonder if Vermont could build upon its historical connection to Auguste and Louis Lumière and the early days of film to create a vibrant film and media industry in Vermont. To be sure, Vermont already has a film and media industry, with many filmmakers already working in the ecosystem and many more students and young professionals eager to learn and stay in Vermont making films.⁴ Others are working in the broadcast gaming industry, community radio and television, graphic design, photography, virtual production, and web3 spaces, while others are establishing important collaborative and training networks, such as Vermont Production Collective and community media centers (public access television and radio stations) like ORCA Media in Montpelier; Media Factory in Burlington; and JAM Junction Arts & Media in White River Junction. A recent Vermont Department of Labor analysis found that there are a total of 482 film and media establishments in Vermont.⁵

Film and media-related production could be a promising industry for the state, capable of providing high-paying jobs for Vermonters, a viable career path for young Vermonters, and an economic boost for local businesses and communities. What would it take to foster a vibrant film and media ecosystem? What can Vermont learn from other states who have created their own thriving media industries?

² "Assessing Vermont's Creative Economy." Mt. Auburn Associates, 2019, <https://www.vermontartscouncil.org/uploads/Vermont%20Creative%20Network/Resources/2019%20Assessing%20Vermont's%20Creative%20Economy.pdf>

³ Farnsworth, C. Local Engineer Exposes the Mystery of the Lumière Brothers' Burlington Factory. Seven Days, Mar 9, 2022. <https://www.sevendaysvt.com/vermont/local-engineer-exposes-the-mystery-of-the-lumiere-brothers-burlington-factory/Content?oid=35055591>

⁴ Appendix A: Vermont Film & Media Industry Sector Data

⁵ Annual 2021 Averages by NAICS code, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, US Bureau of Labor Statistics https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Rn6-gtwlHpa6JsoHklPRe11F8fnjeLaP/view?usp=share_link

What would it take to bring the industry as it stands to the next level? This was the assignment of the Film and Media Task Force established in 2022 by the Vermont state legislature and signed into statute (Act 173) by Gov. Phil Scott.⁶

Statutory Charge of the Task Force

S.11/ACT183 Sec. 49. VERMONT FILM AND MEDIA INDUSTRY TASK FORCE; STUDY; REPORT

(a) There is created the Vermont Film and Media Industry Task Force composed of the following members:

- (1) one current member of the House of Representatives, who shall be appointed by the Speaker of the House;
- (2) one current member of the Senate, who shall be appointed by the Senate Committee on Committees;
- (3) the Secretary of Commerce and Community Development or designee; and
- (4) a member, appointed by the Vermont Arts Council, who shall serve as chair and shall convene meetings of the Task Force.

(b)(1) The Task Force may consult with the Office of Legislative Counsel and the Joint Fiscal Office if necessary to conduct its work.

(2) Members of the Task Force shall receive per diem compensation and reimbursement for expenses as provided in 32 V.S.A. § 1010 for not more than four meetings.

(c) On or before January 15, 2023, the Task Force shall consult relevant stakeholders in the film and media industry and shall study and submit a report to the House Committee on Commerce and Economic Development and to the Senate Committee on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs that reviews the history of State efforts to cultivate the film and media industry in Vermont and what financial and other support the State may provide in the future to revitalize the industry following the COVID-19 pandemic and to invigorate the industry in the future, including:

- (1) successes and failures of past State involvement;
- 2) opportunities to invigorate the industry, attract filmmakers and media entrepreneurs, and promote Vermont as an attractive destination for tourism and for business development;
- (3) how Vermont can differentiate and compete with other jurisdictions that also seek to cultivate a more expansive film and media industry;

⁶ Vermont General Assembly. An Act Related to Economic and Workforce Development, Act. 183, Sec. 49, p.85. <https://legislature.vermont.gov/Documents/2022/Docs/ACTS/ACT183/ACT183%20As%20Enacted.pdf>

- (4) a survey of which entities, in State government and in the private sector, provide outreach and support to businesses in the industry;
- (5) opportunities for employing federal COVID-19 relief funds to revive the industry; and
- (6) a cost-benefit analysis of establishing new State financial, administrative, or other supports for the industry.

Members of the Task Force

Catherine Crawley, Vermont Arts Council Communications Director (chair, Nov 2022 - present)

Sen. Randy Brock

Rep. Stephanie Jerome

Heather Pelham, Vermont Tourism and Marketing Commissioner

*Karen Mittelman, (former) Vermont Arts Council Executive Director (chair, June 2022-Oct 2022)

Summary of Task Force Meetings and Listening Sessions

Summary of Task Force Meetings

Meeting 1

The first meeting of the Vermont Film and Media Industry Task Force was held on Sept. 8, 2022 with the purpose of reviewing the statutory charge of the Task Force and establishing the work ahead, guided by two broad questions: What would be required for Vermont to attract major film productions to our state and what is needed to support and develop Vermont's existing film and media ecosystem.

Sen. Brock provided additional context, explaining that he introduced legislation to establish the Task Force in response to feedback he'd received that Vermont doesn't do enough to support the film industry. His initial bill was to recreate a film commission, but it was modified to instead create the Task Force.

Both Mittelman and Pelham shared that they had begun one-on-one interviews with a few key stakeholders in the industry.

Sen. Brock noted the debate around investments in economic development and the difficulty in measuring the success of those investments. He suggested that tax incentives might be a good option, since they don't cost the state anything unless a production actually happens in the state.

Pelham suggested the group come up with a list of several possible recommendations for the legislature to consider. She added that while we can't always draw a direct connection in ROI, that doesn't mean we can't document impact.

Mittelman brought up the topic of establishing a film office. She had gathered some information from other states with film commissions and it's clear that in order for a film commission or office to be

successful, the state must be ready to make a long-term investment of both staff and financial resources. If Vermont chooses to establish one, it will not have an immediate payoff.

Task Force members identified various individuals who might add valuable perspectives and discussed economic data and additional information they needed to gather. Sen. Brock suggested asking states how much they spend to support the film industry in their state and how they measure their ROI or any other metrics for success.

The group discussed the structure for hearing testimony and decided on two listening sessions with scheduled speakers and a town hall-style open discussion to invite input from the broader film community in the state.

Meeting 2

The second meeting of the Task Force was held on Nov. 9, 2022.

Patrick Titterton from the Vermont Legislative Joint Fiscal Office attended in order to provide support and further research for the report.

The group discussed looking into the archives for more information about the past film commission and why it didn't succeed. Rep. Jerome pointed out that some people might doubt that a film commission could work in Vermont without a clear idea of what happened in the past. Sen. Brock noted that regardless of what happened in the past, models that are working today seem to be more relevant to the group's work.

In looking at possible metrics for a return on investment, Titterton shared a resource from the National Conference of State Legislatures that compiles information on film incentive programs and film offices from every state. The group discussed possible metrics.

Rep. Jerome pointed out the abundance of film and media programs at colleges and career tech centers, and Pelham suggested that measuring the number of students who graduate from those programs and leave the state for work could be an interesting metric. Pelham also noted it might be helpful to think about the number of productions being made in Vermont and their total budgets, including commercial work.

The group discussed the idea for a database of film professionals, equipment, venues, and locations. The idea had come up at both listening sessions and seems to be a real need for the industry to flourish in Vermont. Pelham noted that a database would require dedicated staff to build and maintain. She also pointed out that listing people and equipment was fairly straightforward, but locations could be more difficult to list accurately.

Rep. Jerome asked Titterton if any state Covid funds were available to help stand up a film commission, and Titterton explained that all ARPA funds are committed.

The group discussed key recommendations that had been put forth from the listening sessions: education/training in media and related fields in Vermont (retaining graduates), a database of industry people and equipment in the state, and tax incentives. Rep. Jerome asked if the group thought a film commission should be spun off as an independent organization, and Pelham pointed out that this should be part of the research into other states' programs.

Tasks were assigned to begin drafting the report.

Meeting 3

The third meeting of the Task Force was held on Nov. 9, 2022. This meeting focused on the prepared draft of the report to the legislature, including appendix material. It was decided to move sections around to ensure that the statutory components of the report are addressed. Each component was discussed in full. Additional research will be undertaken to consider the economic impacts and cost-benefit analysis. A second draft will be prepared and shared with Task Force members prior to the fourth meeting.

Meeting 4

The fourth meeting of the Task Force was held on Dec. 22, 2022. This meeting focused on additional content that was added relating to tax incentives, programs in other states, and economic measurements, which was added to a third draft and shared with members prior to the meeting. Members discussed the next draft of the report and discussed edits and recommendations. A fourth draft will be prepared and shared with members prior to a fifth scheduled meeting.

Meeting 5

The fifth meeting of the Task Force was held on Jan. 6, 2023. This meeting focused on reviewing new material on tax incentives, finalizing the draft of the report, and discussion of legislative possibilities.

Summary of Listening Sessions

Sept. 29 Listening Session

[Link to 9.29.22 recording](#)
[Chat](#)

The purpose of the first Listening Session of the Film and Media Industry Task Force, held from 4:30-6:30 p.m., Sept. 29, 2022, was to focus on the needs and challenges around producing films in Vermont. Invited speakers were Jay Craven, co-founder, Kingdom County Productions; Chad Ervin, owner and creative director of Well Told Films and co-founder of Vermont Production Collective; and Vermont-based casting director Shayna Sherwood.

There were 216 registrants, 87 in attendance, and the recording has been viewed 301 times (as of Nov. 21, 2022).

The session began with Sen. Randy Brock and Rep. Stephanie Jerome providing background on why the Task Force was created. Brock stated that the purpose was to do the research, listen to the field, and find out how to create a vibrant film and media industry in Vermont with the help of the legislature and state government. Jerome explained that the legislature has invested in the creative economy through a major workforce development bill last legislative session that was signed by the governor and that the establishment of the task force was a part of the bill.

Jay Craven

Craven spoke first. He is the co-founder along with Bess O'Brien of Kingdom County Productions. He's written, directed, and produced 10 narrative feature films, five documentaries, and a New England Emmy-winning comedy series for public television. Jay's films have been screened at Sundance, Lincoln Center, and many other venues. He's also the artistic director of the Middlebury New Filmmakers Festival and the Woodstock Film Series and the founding Director of Semester Cinema, an intensive experiential learning program for college students.

Craven provided some historical background on the roots of film production in Vermont, saying that in the 90s, Vermont earned a reputation as a maverick state where indie filmmaking and cultural cinema took hold. The films played beyond Vermont, and they created awareness about Vermont. During that same time, the Vermont Film Commission led by Bill Stetson worked to attract commercial Hollywood pictures to the state. They had some success in drawing films like *What Lies Beneath* with Harrison Ford and Michelle Pfeiffer and *Me, Myself and Irene*, with Jim Carrey.

The world of independent film financing and distribution got much worse during the late 1990s, making it hard to survive as an independent working outside the studio system. A number of states began offering film incentive funding to compete with Canada that had been luring American producers to make movies there. Vermont did not do this and probably could not have afforded to compete in a big way in this arena, Craven said, but this ended the march of Hollywood producers lured by Vermont's beauty and relatively low cost.

Today's media industry in Vermont is mainly characterized by production of commercial films and a few documentaries, Craven noted. There is a promising new alliance between media makers and public radio and television with a new program offering up to \$100,000 in grants, which may help young media makers to advance.

Craven said that the lack of any real public funding in the last 10 years has caused him to look to Massachusetts for support in filmmaking. A recent example is his most recent film, *Lost Nation*, which tells a story of Ethan Allen and African-American poet Lucy Terry Prince. Craven will receive \$350,000 from the state of Massachusetts for the film, which is budgeted at about \$2.2 million. Only 25% of the film was shot in Vermont, and in doing so, Craven said he sacrificed another \$100,000 that would've come from Massachusetts. "We believe in Vermont. We wanted to shoot at least part of this film in Vermont, including the Battle of Bennington scenes....This lack of Vermont public funding or even private grant funding in the state, it dramatically limits what is possible here," he said.

Craven recommends that a Vermont film office should be funded at \$1 million per year. "We cannot compete with Massachusetts, nor should we try to, and therefore, we will not attract big Hollywood pictures, particularly with the amount of money available as low as \$1 million a year, but we can develop creative voices, play to regional audiences, stimulate local economies, develop a skilled crew base, and tell our own compelling stories here," he said.

Craven said that encouraging the development of cultural cinema funded with public money would do well in Vermont, following models of public television industries like the BBC in England, the CBC in Canada and Arte in France. Such an office could fund narrative documentary films about Vermont. He also recommended developing a media directory of Vermont media and a repository library of Vermont media. Currently, there is only one film repository in New England, [Northeast Historic Film](#) in Bucksport, ME, dedicated to climate-controlled storage and preservation of film and video.

He noted that film incentives and/or grants are essential, and that Vermont and New Hampshire are the only New England states without film incentives.

Craven supports the state having a small film office that “could advocate, coordinate, and advance the interest of Vermont’s media producing community.” The office could also “establish and oversee the development and implementation of a production fund that aims to support Vermont media makers, not Hollywood productions.” The office could coordinate with public radio and television in the state, and work to raise funds through foundations and private donations. Production and release of its outcomes could be through PBS affiliates, community access, television, film festivals, public venues, and regional arthouses. A resource database could be developed for film workers and crafts people living in or willing to work in Vermont. Similarly, a venue database could be developed for filmmakers wishing to self-distribute into community settings and assist filmmakers wishing to stage events in those settings. Workshops could be staged that could be useful to Vermont media artists, actors, and practitioners in all the different departments. Other functions:

- advocate for legislation beneficial to media practitioners
- develop media literacy standards and innovative programs for Vermont schools
- advocate for film festivals and assist outreach and development of film festival audiences
- a liaison to Vermont Public, Vermont Arts and Humanities Councils, Vermont Department of Education, other relevant agencies and public entities.
- develop joint strategies and partnerships with other state agencies and media stakeholders
- develop an index for Vermont-made media, where it’s located and how it can be accessed
- assist in the development and raise the profile of Vermont's media makers and media industry through PR and outreach
- help define new pathways for distribution and release of worthy Vermont media and develop productive relationships with other media outlets in New England, New York, Quebec and beyond

Craven said the Vermont Film Commission succeeded, but once tax incentives were available elsewhere, that’s where the filmmakers went.

Bill Stetson shared that Steven Spielberg was interested in filming in Vermont but chose not to because the Film Commission couldn’t offer a tax incentive.

Chad Ervin

Chad Ervin is owner and creative director of Well Told Films and co-founder of Vermont Production Collective. Ervin has worked in TV and film for over 20 years as a producer, writer, camera person, editor, and story consultant. As lead film editor, he has made over 30 documentary films for national broadcast festivals and theatrical distribution. His work has received three Emmy awards as well as Peabody, Pope, DuPont, and Columbia Awards among others. He is also co-founder of the Vermont Production Collective, a non-profit organization that is seeking to promote community, collaboration, and skill development for working and aspiring professionals in film and video production and related fields.

Ervin noted that it took 10 years for the tax incentives to really cement in Massachusetts, that they were having to defend them in the legislature for a decade.

Ervin described his efforts with [Vermont Production Collective](#), a grassroots organization connecting the film, video, photography, sound, and graphics industries in Vermont, which was launched in 2021 with support from the Vermont Creative Network. The VPC is developing a searchable directory of active professionals in Vermont, locations, resources, and funding sources. They are also hosting networking events.

Ervin noted existing organizations in Vermont doing important work, providing training and resources, such as [ORCA Media](#) in Montpelier, [Media Factory](#) in Burlington, and [JAM](#) in White River Junction. These organizations are important in creating a coalition of support for the media ecosystem in Vermont, he said.

Shayna Sherwood

A casting director, since the pandemic, Sherwood has worked primarily from her home office in Vermont for West Coast clients. Sherwood said a robust database is key, in addition to education, economics, infrastructure, and tax incentives. An effective media office could begin to identify and organize the resources that are available, not only crew but the question of location, housing, etc.

Selected Comments

Several comments were made about the need for better internet connection in Vermont and how this impedes work at home or co-working spaces, especially for content makers but also for content consumers. Sen. Brock noted that Vermont has invested \$100 million in high speed broadband and so it's on the way.

Comments were made about retaining talent in the state, and that some Vermonters are leaving to work in the film industry elsewhere but would really like to return.

Comments also to make sure that any efforts are inclusive, not just resting on old models, and are embracing other media and digital disciplines, such as photography, community radio, and the gaming sector.

A Vermont filmmaker noted that incentives can be taken away, which was her experience in Mississippi. She shot a feature film there due to the incentives, but later had to return to advocate for the program as the legislature cut it. The incentive program returned. But the point is that unless the value of a film and media industry is made to constituents and lawmakers, incentives are beholden to the whims of whomever is in office.

Experienced filmmakers who participated in the listening session advocated for a robust directory, as well as having a representative from the film office attend film festivals around the country in order to network and sell the state.

It was also noted that infrastructure is important, such as soundstages, interior spaces, and state-of-the-art technology in attracting filmmakers.

One participant observed that making a film is an inherently collaborative process, and there are many different roles that go into production. Workers in the film and media industry learn to wear many different hats, and this should be captured in a database. But the database should be state sponsored for

security purposes, which would provide assurances and an air of legitimacy, especially for out-of-state people who want to add their name and information.

Oct. 20 Listening Session

[Link to 10.20.22 recording](#)
[Chat](#)

The purpose of the final Listening Session of the Film and Media Industry Task Force, held from 4:30-6 p.m., Oct. 20, 2022, was to focus on the challenges and opportunities around establishing a state film commission and the experiences of other state-supported film offices. Panelists were Steven Feinberg, Executive Director, Rhode Island Film & Television Office; Tim Clark, Buffalo Niagara Film Office and former executive director of the Association of Film Commissioners International (AFCI); Scott Finn, CEO, Vermont Public; and Van Dora Williams, professor, Communications and Creative Media, Champlain College.

There were 117 registrants, 48 attendees, and the recording has been viewed 135 times (as of Nov. 21, 2022).

The session began with a summary of how and why the Task Force was established and a review of its goals. Findings of the first listening session were shared and primarily that there is a strong need for a database of crew, equipment, venues, and locations, a desire for adequate funding and tax incentives, and the need to support and retain Vermont's highly trained film and media graduates.

Steven Feinberg

Feinberg was the first speaker. He is the executive director of the [Rhode Island Film and Television Office](#) which he founded in 2004. He is also a screenwriter and director and probably best known for bringing Newport, Rhode Island to millions of viewers through the HBO series, *The Gilded Age*. He made his living as a writer in Hollywood for more than 20 years.

The RI Film Office, which consists of a staff of three—the executive director, an assistant, and a webmaster—is a state-run office under the Council on the Arts, with a budget of about \$300-350,000. Feinberg said their primary focus is “bringing Hollywood to RI.” They also really focus on helping grow the local film industry workforce through education and training in the state. They want to grow and keep local talent. One of the ways they do that is through providing small scholarships and also through a lab-type program, which gives high school students an opportunity to create short films.

In the beginning, Feinberg recognized that tax incentives were key. They offer a 30% motion picture production tax credit. The film or television production needs to be shot primarily in RI, meaning that 51% of principal photography must take place in RI. A minimum of \$100,000 needs to be spent. Documentaries that do not film their principal photography in RI are eligible for up to \$5M in tax credits if they spend 51% of their final production budget and employ five individuals in state, or 51% of their total production days, including pre- and post-production, take place in RI. There is a \$20M annual cap on credits.

More information about the Tax Credit information at <http://www.film.ri.gov//TaxCreditInfo.php#>.

Because proving ROI is important, the office had a study done in March 2022 by [Industrial Economics](#) in Cambridge, MA to examine [the economic and potential tourism impacts of the series NOS4A2 and The Gilded Age](#). The study found that for every \$1 the office gave in tax credit, there was a return of \$5.44 of economic activity.⁷

Feinberg also noted indirect returns on investment like additional tourism – national and international, fan visits, and media exposure.

The office invested in a highly comprehensive website with a database and abundant resources.

They also created a free permit system. Filmmakers must complete permits to shoot, which lets the town, residents and businesses be aware of upcoming shoots, but there is no cost to file a permit. The office notifies the town or city about any permit to shoot that has been filed. The permit asks the applicant to include their budget.

Feinberg noted that it's really important to have an executive director who has connections and knows how to run a film office.

Tim Clark

Tim Clark has been the Buffalo Niagara Film Commissioner for over 16 years. He's also the former chair of the Association of Film Commissioners International, which represents over 300 film offices on six continents.

Clark said that the film industry is growing because of the heightened demand for content in the age of streaming on a variety of platforms. He also said the explosion of production growth means real jobs.

Clark advocated for a film office to be situated in the realm of economic development. He said film is proving an economic driver and a job growth engine. All of those involved need guidance from the economic and workforce development experts. He said many of the production companies coming to his region take time to invest in the region, whether it's hiring local crew or purchasing from local, not chain, stores as it's important to them to give money back to the community that they're disrupting with filmmaking.

He doesn't view the filmmakers as disruptors though, he views them as enhancing and bringing new dollars.

Tax incentives, he says, entice developers to spend their money, and it's recirculating in your community and putting people in your community to work. It brings a sense of pride to the community, he observed.

"I just see the business has evolved in Buffalo, very similar I think to the way you could predict it to be in Vermont. You start kind of slow and before you know it, you're seeing tens of millions of dollars just being poured into the community," Clark said.

"It wasn't until we provided an incentive that we were on the map," he noted.

⁷ Regional Economic and Potential Tourism Impacts in Rhode Island of NOS4A2 and The Gilded Age. Industrial Economics Inc. Mar 22, 22.

http://www.film.ri.gov//documents/RIRegionalEconomicsandTourismofFilmmandTV_3.22.22.pptx

“For many years before we had the incentive, before we had the sort of atmosphere for film-friendly filmmaking up here, I was watching movies that were set in Buffalo, but being shot in Winnipeg, Manitoba, being shot just over the border from here in Toronto and in other places,” he said.

The tax incentives help to make you competitive in the industry. He said that Buffalo has seen the same kind of ROI as what Rhode Island has reported.

Van Dora Williams

Van Dora Williams is a multiple Emmy award-winning documentary filmmaker who is a professor and assistant dean of administration in the division of Communication and Creative Media at Champlain College. She primarily teaches in the broadcast media production program, but also leads the new game sound design major at the college. Currently, she is in the research phase of another documentary on some lesser known civil rights heroines in the south.

Williams is a big proponent of providing students with practical experience, and a local film industry in Vermont could provide that. Williams said that Champlain College often gets requests from filmmakers to work with students as assistants, and she would like to see more of that happen in Vermont. Williams noted that there are fewer students staying in Vermont upon graduation for lack of opportunity and housing. She would like to see a film office engage with higher education institutions to connect students with industry professionals to help provide sustainable employment opportunities.

Williams noted the trend of the convergence of technologies in filmmaking and broadcast gaming software, which is providing brand new opportunities for students and others in the film and media industry. Along with the traditional methods of production, Champlain College is training students to combine gaming technology, virtual sets, and virtual production in their work.

Scott Finn

Finn said that Vermont Public's mission is to engage a broader and more diverse community with stories that bring people together. “Some of those stories are stories that we make. We have more than 100 employees, including 30 people that make stories in one way or another. They're reporters and producers and other storytellers, and then all the other support people that make their stories possible and get them to people,” he said.

Finn said that donors have given almost \$100,000 to support a new program of Vermont Public, Made Here, to help independent filmmakers and storytellers.

Finn agreed with commenters who said that a key challenge for Vermont is that we are a rural state, and so forging a sense of connection, community and companionship – to find resources but also to work – is really important. Already though, he said, a lot of work is being done to forge those connections, specifically citing Vermont Production Collective.

“There are lots of people in Vermont, an amazing number of people that are telling great stories on a shoestring and with limited support. And the idea of the state being a more active partner is really exciting. Vermont Public wants to continue to do what we can to participate in that and help to create and distribute all of this great work,” he said.

Selected Comments

A commenter who is a career and tech ed teacher wanted the film office to value education and training and make a priority to retain students who are being trained in film and media in Vermont. Many of them are now leaving because job opportunities are better in other states with established film offices. However, many of them would rather stay in Vermont.

A commenter noted that tax credits and/or incentives should be available to everyone, not just Vermonters. Vermont has a great brand, he said, and there are major opportunities to attract productions from out of state. He wanted to dispel any “outsiderism and anti-Hollywood” sentiment. Vermont needs to invest in its film industry the same way that it has invested in its historic downtowns, he said.

The film office should be responsible for helping people understand everything that goes into film production, so that people understand the wide range of opportunities that exist in it.

One challenge is the difficulty in sourcing anything for commercial productions – that the business just isn’t there. So, many creatives are trying to decide if they should stay or move to a larger market with more resources.

One commenter noted that the world famous Lumière Brothers, creators of cinema, built a factory in Burlington in 1903 where they once produced films and photography. So the state could build upon and be proud of its historical connection to film. “We have a very powerful story that we can claim as the origin of our commitment to this process,” he said.⁸

Success and Failures of Past State Efforts

One path to creating a vibrant film sector is by establishing a state film office, an approach that many other states have done with varying levels of success. Vermont has its own history of supporting a film office, which has lain dormant for nearly a decade.

In 1995, Vermont enacted legislation establishing a Vermont Film Corporation (VFC) – otherwise known as the Vermont Film Commission – to act as a nonprofit public corporation (Vermont Statutes Title 10 Sec. 644-646) with a board of seven directors under the Department of Tourism and Marketing (VDTM). Its mission was to promote Vermont as a location for commercial film and television production and to facilitate the participation of local individuals in such productions. Its founder and board president was Bill (Eugene William) Stetson.⁹

According to the archived VFC website, the Commission assisted and supported producers’ needs from pre-production through post-production, provided research information to the creative team, acted as a liaison between production and government agencies and local communities, and assisted in securing

⁸ Martínez Cazón, H. The Lumière North American Company: Seeing Is Believing. *Vermont History*, 89(2), Summer/Fall 2021: 118-149. <https://vermonthistory.org/journal/89/V8902LumiereNorthAmericanCompany.pdf>

⁹ Vermont Film Commission, Vermont History Collection, 1954-2011. <https://vermonthistory.org/documents/findaid/VermontFilmCommission.pdf>

locations, accommodations, permits and permissions. It also provided a database of locations, working crew, equipment, vehicles, stages, post-production resources and support services.

The VFC was created with an expenditure authorization of \$40,000 in FY1997 to accomplish the purposes of the office. The original statute directed the VFC to include “plans to minimize future state funding of the corporation’s activities,” which, given its nonprofit status, might suggest that the goal could have been to fund the office primarily through charitable donations. Further, the statute says that private sources should be maximized to fund the VFC’s activities.

The VFC was largely criticized by filmmakers for not providing tax incentives, like those offered in many other states. Vermont previously allowed some small tax incentives related to film production. The first, the Movie Production Tax Credit, “allowed nonresidents to take a credit against income they receive for a dramatic performance in a commercial film production during that tax year.” This credit lasted from 1998 to 2012. The second, the Vermont Film Production Incentive, “provided grants to cover certain production expenses incurred on Vermont film productions.” Both these incentives were later repealed.¹⁰

Despite the lack of incentives, the VFC was credited with helping to bring a few big-budget films to the state. Two of those were released in 2000: the thriller *What Lies Beneath*, starring Harrison Ford and Michelle Pfeiffer, and the comedy *Me, Myself & Irene*, featuring Jim Carrey and Renée Zellweger. The drama *The Cider House Rules*, featuring Charlize Theron, Tobey Maguire and Michael Caine, was released in 1999.

Loranne Turgeon was VFC executive director for about five years starting in the late 1990s and helped to attract those big-budget productions to Vermont due to her connections in the film industry.¹¹

In the Sept. 29, 2022, Task Force Listening Session, Stetson described the activities of the office: “We were basically available 24/7. We’d get a call on a Friday night that someone was coming in for a scout. We were there at five in the morning Sunday morning. And our office at 10 Baldwin Street next to the State House was really vital and really alive. And our database was very good and our locations were terrific...it was a really exciting time. Talk about small towns. In Addison, Vermont, in one month we had Harrison Ford, Michelle Pfeiffer, and Jim Carey shooting. So we really made it happen.”

In February 2011, a group of Vermont filmmakers sent then Gov. Peter Shumlin a letter recommending a restructuring of the VFC, replacing the full-time executive director with a part-time administrator. According to a Seven Days news article published March 9, 2011, filmmakers noted several issues with the VFC – that the office was not reaching out to filmmakers enough, spearheading a robust marketing

¹⁰ Bloomberg BNA Tax Database. <https://pro.bloombergtax.com/federal-tax-resources/>

¹¹ Walsh, M. Faux Business: Hallmark Loves Vermont but Shoots Its Christmas Films Elsewhere. Seven Days, Dec. 19, 2018. <https://www.sevendaysvt.com/vermont/faux-business-hallmark-loves-vermont-but-shoots-its-christmas-films-elsewhere/Content?oid=24281014>

effort, or being a helpful source for Vermont filmmakers. Budget cuts had led to the commission only having one full-time employee, its executive director, whom Vermont filmmakers deemed unable to run the VFC effectively. The executive director at that time, Joe Bookchin, stressed that a lack of administrative staff made it difficult to fully accomplish the commission's goals.¹²

In March 2011, the VFC was repealed and folded into a new office created within the Agency of Commerce and Community Development's Department of Economic, Housing and Community Development called the Office of Creative Economy (OCE). The OCE was directed "to provide business, networking, and technical support to establish, grow, and attract enterprises involved with the creative economy, primarily focused on but not limited to such areas as film, new and emerging media, software development, and innovative commercial goods."¹³ VFC Executive Director Bookchin was appointed as the director of the new office.

In addition, the statute directed the Secretary of Commerce and Community Development to appoint a Film and New Media Advisory Board to make recommendations to the Secretary "on promoting Vermont as a location for commercial film and television production and facilitating the participation of local individuals and companies in such productions. The primary function of the Advisory Board is to recommend to the Secretary strategies to link Vermonters employed in the film and new media, video, or other creative arts, to economic opportunities in their trades in Vermont."¹⁴

The OCE was disbanded in 2014, thus stalling the concentrated effort to cultivate a thriving film economy in Vermont.

In 2018, another effort to establish a film commission was advanced in bill H.854. It passed the House but stalled in committee in the Senate. The legislation grew out of efforts by the now defunct Vermont Production Council, which aimed "to identify and promote resources from around the state and to connect them with content creators seeking locations, experienced screenwriters, cinematographers, production accountants, equipment manufacturers, and industry professionals of all trades."¹⁵ In 2017, the VPC debuted an online directory, now defunct, of Vermont-specific filming assets, which listed Vermont companies, individuals, and locations already available and ready to work with film productions.¹⁶

¹² Harrison, M. Say Good-Bye to the VT Film Commission, Hello to the Creative Economy. Seven Days, Mar 9, 2011. <https://www.sevendaysvt.com/vermont/say-good-bye-to-the-vt-film-commission-hello-to-the-creative-economy/Content?oid=2142767>

¹³ Vermont General Assembly. An Act Relating to Job Creation, Economic Development, and Buy Local Agriculture. No.52, Sec. 16-17, p.24.

<https://legislature.vermont.gov/Documents/2012/Docs/ACTS/ACT052/ACT052%20As%20Enacted.pdf>

¹⁴ 2014 Vermont Statutes. 3 V.S.A. § 2471d Vermont Film and New Media Advisory Board.

<https://law.justia.com/codes/vermont/2014/title-3/chapter-47/section-2471d/>

¹⁵ Vermont General Assembly. H.854 An Act Relating to Promoting Television and Film Production

<https://legislature.vermont.gov/Documents/2018/Docs/BILLS/H-0854/H-0854%20As%20passed%20by%20the%20House%20Official.pdf>

¹⁶ Vermont Production Council Aims to Attract More Film and Television Projects. Press Release. VTDigger, Sept. 21, 2017. <https://vtdigger.org/2017/09/25/vermont-production-council-aims-attract-film-television-projects/>

Opportunities for Vermont Film and Media Industry

To invigorate the industry, attract filmmakers and media entrepreneurs, and promote Vermont as an attractive destination for tourism and for business development, there are several avenues to draw upon – from what already exists in Vermont’s film and media sector and from recommendations of new bold ideas from stakeholders. Three aspects seem to be of critical importance: production incentives; a centralized database; and education/training.

Production Incentives

How do we incentivize the development of a robust and self-sustaining media ecosystem in Vermont? Vermont is among only a handful of states that do not offer incentives, which the Motion Picture Association says “play a decisive role in where companies choose to locate future productions.”¹⁷ Likely, a tax incentive was a big reason why the 2016 film *A Christmas in Vermont* was filmed in New York, which offers a hefty incentive package that starts with a 30% fully refundable tax credit on qualified production and post-production costs while filming in the state and adds bonuses the more you spend.

Production incentives take the form of tax credits or rebates and grants. Tax incentives run the gamut, from a “certified film tax credit” which requires a local CPA audit, to a “discount” when credits are sold through a broker on the open market, to a film grant (a direct payment), to a “refundable” credit which acts more like a rebate, to a “transferable credit” which can be sold or brokered to another company that has tax liability in the given state.¹⁸ Tax credits on average run between 10 and 30 percent.

There are a variety of ways to incentivize production, from hiring a percentage of in-state crew to requiring a minimum in state spend.¹⁹ Productions can also be required to shoot in certain areas of the state, provide on-the-job training, make a donation to a qualified non-profit, use qualified production facilities, or even hold red carpet events. In many states, television productions, which have greater longevity, are offered greater incentives.

Although return on investment is hard to quantify, the overall economic impact of a production, including hotels, restaurants, transport, entertainment, jobs, and more creates a net profit. More information on ROI is provided in subsequent sections.

¹⁷ Motion Picture Association, Production Incentives as an Economic Development Tool.

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1rmidKY-ExyZ6fAFO-aC6FoNmSbIV814y/view?usp=sharing>

¹⁸ Film Incentives Glossary by Media Services

<https://www.mediaservices.com/production-incentives/incentives-glossary/>

¹⁹ US Film Tax Incentives Map by Media Services <https://www.mediaservices.com/services/production-incentives/>

Because Vermont lacks a large corporate tax base, some have argued that it likely could not offer enough of an incentive to attract productions to the state. However, Vermont could support more short-form projects with a lower threshold of entry. Smaller states like West Virginia and Rhode Island have done this. At a minimum, a small incentive could be offered, such as 5-10% of what a film producer spends up to a maximum amount. Some incentive programs have been criticized because they have a minimum production budget size cap, which can be out of reach for smaller productions. A solution would be to have a low minimum threshold for the credit and allow monies spent to be cumulative per client over a 12 month period, for example, which would allow for smaller projects to add up to the total. Another solution would be to remove the spending limit for student-based productions. Whatever is offered, it has to be right-sized for Vermont's unique situation.

Many times tax incentives have to be defended and justified each year. It took about a decade for Massachusetts' tax incentives to be secure.

Of note is that Vermont has downtown and village tax credits that don't directly pay for themselves but are viewed as effective because they successfully help to stimulate private investment, create jobs, restore historic buildings, and jump start revitalization.²⁰ The tax credits are available for eligible commercial buildings and non-profit owned buildings over 30 years old (not private residences, but rental properties are eligible) located within designated downtowns, villages or neighborhoods. See <https://accd.vermont.gov/historic-preservation/funding/tax-credits>. Could a similar Vermont-style film and media tax credit invigorate that industry?

Another type of production incentive is to offer direct funding through grants or rebates. One example is the State of Iowa, which does not have tax credits. Instead, the Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs' Office of Media Production offers the Greenlight Grant of up to \$50,000 with a 50% cash match requirement for film or digital media production and post-production projects.¹⁵ Besides supporting film productions through direct grants, the state's Office of Media Production supports jobs for writers, fosters a strong community among Iowa filmmakers, and encourages creatives to stay in Iowa through a variety of production tools, educational offerings, festivals, and networking opportunities.²¹

Other models could be created, such as film cooperatives. One such model is Spira in Quebec City, a member cooperative that supports and fosters the creation and production of independent filmmaking. Each year the cooperative supports about 30 films through its equipment rental program, distribution markets and festivals, and training and networking activities. It also maintains an online catalog of over 300 titles available for online streaming.²²

²⁰ Vermont 2021 Tax Expenditure Reviews, Legislative Joint Fiscal Office, Jan. 15, 2021 <https://lifo.vermont.gov/assets/Subjects/Tax-Expenditure-Reports/b6a0cbf3dc/2021-Tax-Expenditure-Review-Report-FINAL.pdf>

²¹ Iowa Office of Media Production website <https://iowaculture.gov/media>

²² Spira website <https://www.spira.quebec/en/>

For a closer look at tax incentives in other states and their economic impact, see the next section, “A Comparison of Other Jurisdictions.”

A Centralized Database

An up-to-date centralized database – a directory of local businesses providing services and resources that filmmakers want – is essential. Making a film is an inherently collaborative process, and there are many different aspects that go into production – just consider the lengthy credits at the end of a production. Indeed, the film and media industry provides many job opportunities.

The database should have:

- Local Talent – actors, writers, cinematographers, sound engineers, caterers, costume, hair and makeup, construction, carpenters, painters, electricians
- Amenities – large hotels, spacious rooms for crew to eat, parking lots that can fit 20 tractor trailer trucks, rental equipment
- Locations for shooting
- Searchable images of ideal Vermont locations (varied architecture, water scenes, covered bridges, etc.)
- Other resources like props
- Venues for screenings and film distribution

Workers in the film and media industry learn to wear many different hats, and this should be captured in a database. Such a database should be a centralized, state-sponsored entity, providing a security assurance and an air of legitimacy, especially for out-of-state people who would want to add their name and information.

One organization currently working to develop a database is Vermont Production Collaborative (VPC). VPC is developing a searchable directory of active film and media professionals living and working in Vermont as well as locations, funding sources, and other resources.²³

At a minimum, it is recommended that film and media productions register their projects in some way in Vermont. This could be done on a volunteer basis with no enforcement mechanism. This would be an effective way to begin to track and quantify film and media work that is taking place in the state.

Education and Training

Retaining and recruiting a skilled workforce is paramount to Vermont and its aging population. Through its career tech education centers as well as colleges and universities, Vermont already has abundant educational and training opportunities in digital media, film, and production, and the infrastructure and resources of talent are growing. A deeper connection to these educational resources would be helpful. A

²³ Vermont Production Collective <https://vtproductioncollective.com/>

film office could coordinate involvement with our state’s educational and training programs, provide opportunities for students to gain important on-the-job training, and help to retain young professionals once they graduate. See Appendix B: Film and Digital Media Education and Training Programs in Vermont.

Establishing a Film Office and Funding Mechanism

A dedicated film office could be established to support film and media production in the state. Responsibilities could include managing a productive incentive program, creating and maintaining a robust database, supporting existing film and media education and training around the state, marketing to filmmakers, organizing film festivals and other networking opportunities, and importantly, devising a mechanism for reliably tracking return on investment.

Our research suggests that five years is the minimum time span to get a film office well-established and make enough connections to attract producers. Additionally, the longer time span would provide enough data to measure cost-benefit more reliably.

Film offices are typically staffed with a minimum of two to three employees. For example, Massachusetts employs a full-time director who “serves as the primary liaison to the motion picture industry; works with state and local officials; fosters interest in shooting in MA; supports the development of infrastructure and workforce; and handles inquiries about our tax incentives program, production, locations permitting, production support, locations and soundstages in the Commonwealth.”²⁴ The director oversees a full-time assistant deputy who “focuses on locations and scouting, also works with locations and municipalities on permitting issues, tracking production information/schedules, managing our internship program, and other tasks as needed” and a full-time office administrator who “focuses on ensuring our website and ReelScout platform are up to date with production and industry information, develops printed materials, manages/supports MFO-related events, processing invoices, serving as an initial point of contact for incoming communications, ensures that the office runs smoothly, handles supplies, and other administrative duties.” The Massachusetts office falls under the Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development and the Massachusetts Marketing Partnership.

Other states have larger offices. For example, the State of Montana Film Office employs a film commissioner, media incentive and grant specialist, locations coordinator, and a film and marketing assistant.²⁵

We examined estimated costs of establishing a film office. Rhode Island currently has a total budget of \$325,000, although the executive director noted it should be about \$500,000. The office employs 2.6 FTEs, but anticipates having 4 FTE after the 2023 legislative session. In Vermont, staffing costs for an office of two full-time employees are estimated to be between \$185K and \$215K. An additional

²⁴ Massachusetts Film Office website <https://mafilm.org/> and email from Acting Director Jere Shea on 12.5.22

²⁵ Montana Film Office website https://www.montanafilm.com/mfo_aboutus/

\$350,000 is estimated for general overhead, economic research, and consulting fees.

Comparisons of Other Jurisdictions

Comparing Vermont to what other states are doing to promote their film economies can be useful. Vermont is among four states without a film office, which includes Alaska, Delaware, and Wisconsin.

Overall, for states with incentive programs, the consensus is that the incentives do not pay for themselves directly when measured purely in terms of tax revenue, but a case could be made for them as having a positive impact on employment, economic activity, and tourism. As demand for streaming content increases, competition for productions ramps up, and incentives are one way to attract production dollars.²⁶

Media Services is a New York, Los Angeles and Baton Rouge-based company providing payroll and production services to the US film industry. It also provides consulting services for production incentives, helping film, TV, web or commercial projects find the most lucrative state incentives programs. Its website includes a comprehensive, interactive US map of production incentives in each state.²⁷

The Global Incentives Index provides a detailed overview of all national, state and province-level incentives worldwide.²⁸

Notably, states typically treat the type of production differently – for example, scripted movies and series get the lion’s share of states’ incentive budgets for tax credits and rebates, but there are a number of programs with incentives for unscripted production, i.e., nonfiction TV and film.²⁹

Below we provide some data from Rhode Island, Massachusetts, and Montana.

For further information, see Appendix C: Growing Vermont’s Filmmaking Economy_March 3 2022.

Rhode Island³⁰

Rhode Island estimated the costs of its credit program outweighed the benefits when measured by employment and tax revenue generated, but likely had a positive impact on economic activity in the

²⁶ World of Locations, May-Oct 2022 Digital Edition

<https://www.screendaily.com/digital-editions/world-of-locations-may-october-2022-digital-edition/5170135.article>

²⁷ US Film Tax Incentives Map by Media Services <https://www.mediaservices.com/services/production-incentives/>

²⁸ Global Incentives Index 2022, Olsberg-SPI, Nov 2022 Edition,

<https://www.o-spi.com/projects/blog-global-incentives-index>

²⁹ Production Incentives for Nonfiction TV & Film by Media Services

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1rmiidKY-ExyZ6fAFO-aC6FoNmSblV814y/view?usp=sharing>

³⁰ Economic Development Tax Incentives Evaluation Act: Evaluation of “Motion Picture Production Tax Credits,” Tax Years 2016-2018. State of Rhode Island Department of Revenue Office of Revenue Analysis, Feb. 18, 2022.

<https://dor.ri.gov/media/4001/download?language=en>

state. Rhode Island provides a credit, called the Motion Picture Production Tax Credit (MPPTC), against a motion picture production company's business corporation tax, the taxation of insurance companies, or the personal income tax. Productions can claim 30 percent of the state-certified production costs so long as they are: attributable to activity in Rhode Island, primary locations are in Rhode Island, and the production budget is more than \$100,000. The maximum amount of the credit is \$7 million, and the tax credit can be carried forward for up to three years. Productions are not required to meet any employment or wage criteria.

The capped tax credit amount for all productions (including theater productions) was \$20 million for 2020 and 2021, and in 2022 the capped amount is \$30 million. Legislation sunsets July 1, 2027.

How Much It's Utilized. Usage of the credit has historically run comfortably below the cap. Between 2016 and 2018, 11 MPPTC recipients received \$4,055,679 in total on \$16,222,719 of certifiable expenses, for an average of \$1,351,893 in credits on \$5,407,573 of expenses per year.

Return on Investment. The Rhode Island analysis calculates "break-even" percentages across tax revenues, employment and RI GDP by varying the percentage of direct, indirect, and induced activity attributable to the tax incentive. This type of analysis acknowledges the fact that it is incredibly hard to ascertain whether an activity would have happened without the incentive and presents the full range of potential impacts regardless of how much "impact" a policy has.

It finds that in terms of net revenues and employment, the costs outweigh the benefits, regardless of percentage of economic activity attributable to the tax incentive. In terms of net revenue, and for the average year 2016-2018, the program was estimated to generate \$40,503 in tax revenue at a cost of \$1,351,893 in forgone revenue. Thus, the net revenues per dollar of credit would be \$0.03. The average annual job impact would decrease employment anywhere between 3 FTEs at 100% attribution to 26 at 10% of economic activity attributable to the tax incentive.

The impact on the overall economy was more positive, however. If 41.2% of economic activity were attributable to the MPPTC, the state would "break even" or have the benefits in terms of Rhode Island's GDP of the incentive directly match the costs. At 80% attribution the annual RI GDP Impact would be about \$2.5 million. Conversely, if only 10% of the economic activity were attributable to the program, the program would cost about \$2 million more than it returned.

Massachusetts³¹

³¹ Report on the Impact of Massachusetts Film Industry Tax Incentives through Calendar Year 2017, Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Department of Revenue. Mar 1, 2022.

<https://www.mass.gov/doc/dor-report-on-the-impact-of-massachusetts-film-industry-tax-incentives-through-calendar-year-2017/download>

Massachusetts estimated that its program likely has positive returns on economic activity and employment, but generates only about \$0.11 in tax revenue per dollar value of the credits awarded. Massachusetts doesn't have a cap, but generally appears to benefit about 120-150 productions per year.

Massachusetts offers media productions a 25% production credit, a 25% payroll credit and sales tax exemption.³² Projects that spend more than \$50,000 in Massachusetts qualify for the payroll tax credit. Previously, Massachusetts required that 50% of total budget or filming must occur in the state but that was increased to 75% in 2022. If at least 75% of the total budget and 75% of the principal photography days occur in Massachusetts, the project also qualifies for the production credit and the sales tax exemption.

To sweeten the program for decision makers, payroll credits apply to both above and below the line expenses. (Above the line refers to positions, such as Directors, Producers, Screenwriters, etc., that provide creative direction and leadership for a project, while below the line positions are people who provide day-to-day support). And unlike other programs surveyed, out-of-state production expenses are also included.

Tax credits are refundable and transferable. Production companies can use the credits to reduce tax liabilities or cash them out at 90%. If the production company chooses to transfer or sell them, the buyer can use the credits to reduce state corporate, insurance, financial institution, or personal income tax liabilities. The program does not have annual or project caps, and recipients can use the credits for up to five years.

How Much It's Utilized. In calendar year 2017, 148 productions spent a total of \$349.5 million on all expenses, with most of that spending, 71 percent, coming from feature films. Of that amount \$87.4 million was eligible for tax credits and \$65 million worth of tax credits were used the fiscal year.

Between 2006 and 2017, productions generated \$759.4 million in tax credits of which \$740.4 million have been utilized. Since most production companies do not have declared tax liabilities with the Commonwealth, they mostly end up selling credits to brokers or taxpayers.

Return on Investment. The report estimates various impacts using a REMI model that starts with a figure of \$85.5 million of net new Massachusetts spending that would not have occurred without the tax credit. In 2017, the production credits increased state GDP by \$126.4 million, economic output by \$196 million, and State Personal Income by \$12 million. State taxes increased by \$9.9 million. Subtracting the increase in taxes from the \$84.7 million in tax credits generated, the net cost of the program to the State in 2017 was \$77.4 million, offering a small \$0.11 in state revenue per dollar of total tax expenditure.

On the employment side, the tax credits increased direct resident and non-resident employment by 585 and 569 respectively. This factors in both direct employment on specific productions and indirect jobs created, though indirect employment was largely a wash due to offsetting state spending cuts to pay for the credits. Wages also increased by \$35 million for residents and \$60.3 million for non-residents.

³² MA Film Office Production Tax Incentives website <https://mafilm.org/production-tax-incentives/>

The report also briefly looked at some downstream impacts of the film industry more broadly, including the economic impact of the construction of a new studio in Devens, MA and of increased tourism in the state caused by increased exposure through media. The report focused on the construction project's boost to the local economy and cited traditional construction multipliers to deliver a benefit of \$64.7 million to the state's output. For tourism, the report chose not to estimate these effects, citing the lack of reliable models that could accurately measure how much tourism is directly attributable to the film and television industry.

Montana³³

Montana reported that their program was important to a high degree of economic activity and employment, while mostly paying for itself in terms of tax revenue generated by their metrics. Montana has a cap on the value of credits that can be awarded and looks to consistently hit that cap.

In 2019, Montana passed the Montana Economic Development Industry Advancement (MEDIA) Act with the following provisions:

- a. The primary incentive available is a 20% transferable income tax credit on production expenditures that are made within MT. This credit can increase to up to 35% of the production company's base investment per year through the following credits.
- b. 25% of compensation for MT resident crew
- c. 15% of compensation for non-MT resident crew
- d. 20% of above-the-line compensation (actor, director, producer, writer)
- e. 30% of compensation paid to a student enrolled in a MT college/university who works on the production for college credit
- f. 10% of payments to Montana colleges and universities for stage, equipment, rentals, or location fees for filming on campus
- g. 10% of all in-studio facility/equipment expenditures that rents a studio for 20 days or more
- h. 5% of expenditures in an underserved county
- i. 5% for using "Filmed in Montana" screen credit logo
- j. 25% of post-production wages.

How Much It's Utilized. Between January 2020 and June 2022, 228 media productions filmed in Montana and 32 claimed incentives through the MEDIA Act. While they made up a small percentage of the overall productions in the state, MEDIA Act productions spent far more money -- \$130.1 million compared to \$60.8 million -- than other productions. Of that overall amount, film productions were able to claim \$20.3 million in tax credits. In both 2020 and 2021, the program hit the capped maximum of \$10 million. Because of the way the program is administered only \$0.3 million in credits were validated by June 2022, though \$5.6 million was reserved.

³³ The Economic Impact of Montana Film Production: An Analysis of the Industry and the MEDIA Act, July 2020-June 2022. Montana Film Office, Montana Department of Commerce, June 16, 2022. <https://leg.mt.gov/content/Committees/Interim/2021-2022/Revenue/Meetings/June-2022/MEDIA-Tax-Incentive-report.pdf>

Return on Investment. A 2022 independent report of the MEDIA Act required by the Montana Legislature estimated that MEDIA Act Tax Credit productions generated a total economic impact of \$83 million between 2020 and June 2022, \$42.6 million of this came as a result of direct spending by the production companies and the other \$40.4 million was the result of indirect and induced spending that was created. The program is estimated to have supported 380 FTE's between 2020 and June 2022. A total of 160 of these jobs were estimated to be directly supported, while 220 of the FTE's were estimated to be the result of indirect and induced effects.

The report estimates that from July of 2020 to June of 2022 the film industry generated \$16.6 million total. Of this, the report attributed to MEDIA Act Tax Credit Productions \$10.5 million. \$6.0 million of this came from economic activity and the remaining \$4.5 million came from taxes on non-resident wages.

The report also looks at the tax impacts of the MEDIA Act. Starting with economic activity, the report estimated that MEDIA Act productions generated an extra \$6 million in tax revenues throughout the state, of which \$3.6 million went to the State. Non-resident compensation taxes were estimated to have added another \$4.5 million to the State's revenues for the period of July 2020-June 2022.

To calculate the ROI on the program since its inception, the report adds data from 2019 to the analysis and revenues from productions not supported by the MEDIA Act. It finds that \$20.1 million in local and state tax revenues cost \$20.3 million in validated credits. This implies a net loss of roughly \$200,000 when the tax expenditure of the credits are compared to the tax revenue generated by production companies utilizing the credit. If only considering state tax revenues, the net loss in revenue to the state grows. It is estimated that roughly \$14.0 million in tax revenue was generated by production companies receiving credits remitted to the state. This implies a net cost of \$6.3 million in forgone revenue.

It should be noted that the report does not consider what the forgone economic impact of state spending would have been. Put simply, the \$20.3 million in validated credits equates to \$20.3 million the state did not spend on other programs or projects that could result in additional economic activity. A "but for" case is not estimated, meaning that the proportion of the film productions that would not have occurred is not estimated. Because of this, economic activity, employment and tax revenue returns may be overstated. Also, the time-period in question is unique in that it occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic.

A Survey of Vermont Entities Providing Support to the Industry

A number of entities, in State government and in Vermont's private and nonprofit sector, provide outreach and support to entities in the film and media industry. For a closer look at the state of the Film and Media industry in Vermont, including media resources and providers, see Appendix A: Vermont Film & Media Industry Sector Data.³⁴ The full report, the CreateVT Action Plan, from which the data are taken

³⁴ Film & Media Industry Sector, CreateVT Action Plan, pp. 82-3.

<https://www.vermontartscouncil.org/uploads/Vermont%20Creative%20Network/Resources/2019%20Assessing%20Vermont's%20Creative%20Economy.pdf>

is available at <https://www.vermontartscouncil.org/vermont-creative-network/action-plan>.

Vermont Arts Council. Since 1965, the Vermont Arts Council has been the state's primary provider of funding, advocacy, and information for the arts in Vermont. It is also the only designated state arts agency in the U.S. that is also an independent nonprofit organization. Grants through the Council are available for individuals and organizations and are offered throughout the year. In addition, the Vermont Creative Network – an initiative of the VAC established by the Vermont Legislature in 2016 – works to advance the creative sector, which includes the film industry. According to research commissioned by the VCN, film and media comprise 12% of the state's creative workers. www.vermontartscouncil.org
www.vermontcreativenetwork.org

Vermont Humanities. Founded in 1974, Vermont Humanities is a statewide nonprofit organization seeking to engage all Vermonters in the world of ideas, foster a culture of thoughtfulness, and inspire a lifelong love of reading and learning. A state affiliate of the National Endowment of the Humanities, Vermont Humanities has a broad range of programs serving Vermonters of all ages and backgrounds and sponsors talks, book discussions, literacy programs, and other humanities events throughout the state. It also provides a number of project grants for traditional humanities and applied humanities and community development work as well as smaller rapid response grants for humanities-focused community projects. www.vermonthumanities.org

Agency of Commerce and Community Development. The Agency of Commerce and Community Development (ACCD) encompasses three major state departments and many programs that serve the Vermont public by enhancing the Vermont business climate, marketing Vermont to tourists and others, and strengthening our communities in a wide variety of ways. <https://accd.vermont.gov/> The **Vermont Department of Tourism and Marketing** within ACCD has a history of supporting film and media productions. <https://accd.vermont.gov/tourism>

Vermont Production Collective. Vermont Production Collective is a nonprofit organization that seeks to promote community, collaboration, and skill development for working and aspiring professionals in film and video production and related fields. The VPC is developing a searchable directory of active professionals in Vermont, locations, resources, and funding sources. <https://vtproductioncollective.com/>

ORCA Media. ORCA Media provides free video production, training and distribution services to citizens and organizations in the 13 Central Vermont towns it serves. www.orcamedia.net

Media Factory. Media Factory in Burlington is a community media center advancing free and open media, civic engagement, and government transparency through radio, live tv, podcasts, training, and other programs. <https://www.mediafactory.org/>

Junction Arts & Media (JAM). Junction Arts & Media, based in White River Junction, is a 501(c)3 community-building organization that enables open public dialogue, expression, and government

transparency by providing access to the expanding world of media, serving the towns of Hartford, Hartland and Norwich, VT and Hanover and Lebanon, NH. <https://uvjam.org/>

Education Programs. For a list of colleges providing film and digital media production programs and high school career technical education programs, see Appendix B: Film & Digital Media Education & Training Programs in Vermont.

CreativeGround. A project of the New England Foundation for the Arts, CreativeGround is the dynamic regional directory that celebrates and reflects the vital work of New England's artists, creatives, culture bearers, creative organizations and businesses. Professional discipline areas included in the film and media industry are audio/sound, cyberart, digital, film, marketing/advertising, radio, television, and video. Costume and make-up artists are also included. <https://www.creativeground.org/>

Vermont Association of Broadcasters (VAB). Since 1955, the VAB has helped promote over-the-air broadcasting in Vermont by supporting, protecting and advocating for its member stations. <https://vab.org/home/>

Vermont Access Network (VAN). VAN connects 24 Community Media Centers that together operate 81 local cable channels across Vermont. VAN Members use emerging communications technologies to foster free speech, encourage civic engagement, enhance public discourse, and allow elected officials and community members to communicate better. <https://vermontaccess.net/vermont-access-network/>

Opportunities for Utilizing Federal COVID-19 Relief

Covid-19 relief funding through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) have already been designated through several state programs that could provide funding for individuals and organizations in the film and media industry, as follows:

Creative Futures Grants through the Vermont Arts Council. A total of \$9 million of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds was allocated to the Vermont Arts Council for grants to creative sector entities that have sustained economic harm due to the pandemic. Creative Futures Grants are available to all Vermont-based creative economy nonprofits and for-profit businesses including sole proprietors that can demonstrate economic harm caused by or exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Unincorporated arts, humanities, or cultural groups without official nonprofit status may apply using a fiscal agent provided they are otherwise eligible. Applications are open through June 30, 2023.

<https://www.vermontartscouncil.org/grants/creative-futures-grant-program>

Vermont Economic Development Authority (VEDA) Short-term Forgivable Loan Program. This program opened for “priority sectors” on Sept. 15, 2022. A total of \$19.0 million was allocated from Vermont’s ARPA funds to make loans to businesses, including sole proprietors, that meet the eligibility criteria of the program. Priority sectors include arts and culture.

<https://www.veda.org/financing-options/other-financing-option/forgivable-0>

Community Recovery and Revitalization Program (CRRP). A total of \$40 million from Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery ARPA Funds was allocated to the Agency of Commerce and Community Development (ACCD) for the CRRP. The program provides recovery funding for projects that spur economic recovery and revitalization to mitigate the negative economic impacts of Covid-19 in communities across the state. Eligible uses for these funds include projects for nonprofits and small businesses in impacted industries, which includes the arts and entertainment.

<https://accd.vermont.gov/economic-development/funding-incentives/community-recovery-and-revitalization-program>

Investing in the Upskilling of Private Sector Employers to Support the Evolution of Business and Organizational Models. Section 4 of Act 143 passed in the 2022 legislative session appropriates \$250,000 in ARPA SFR dollars to the Agency of Commerce and Community Development (ACCD) in FY2023 to regrant a performance-based contract to the Vermont Professionals of Color Network for business coaching and other training for BIPOC business owners; networking; and career fairs, workshops and paid internships.

Work-based Learning and Training Program. Section 12 of Act 143 passed in the 2022 legislative session appropriates \$1.5 million in General Fund dollars in FY 2023 to the Department of Labor to implement the Vermont Work-Based Learning and Training Program created in the bill. The Program will be developed statewide by the Department of Labor to serve transitioning secondary and postsecondary students and Vermonters seeking work-based experience as part of a career experience or change.

Vermont Trades Scholarship Program. Section 14 of Act 143 passed in the 2022 legislative session appropriates \$3.0 million in FY 2023 in General Fund dollars to the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation (VSAC) for scholarships under the Vermont Trades Scholarship Program for trades students who demonstrate financial need. It creates a scholarship program to be administered by VSAC to disburse initial licensing fees, exam fees and tuition payments on behalf of eligible individuals. Any funds left over at the end of the year will be rolled over and available to VSAC the following year for scholarships.

802 Opportunity. VSAC and the Community College of Vermont (CCV) have partnered to offer Vermonters with a family income of \$75,000 or less the opportunity to attend CCV tuition free for the 2022–2023 academic year. The 802 Opportunity is open to new or returning students of any age, starting in the fall of 2021 and continuing for two academic years. CCV offers film and media degrees or certificates.³⁵

Considerations for Cost-Benefit Analysis

³⁵ 802 Opportunity at Community College of Vermont <https://www.vsac.org/free-tuition-ccv-yes-really>

A cost-benefit analysis of establishing new State financial, administrative, or other supports for the industry would be beneficial. Although a quantitative cost-benefit analysis is beyond the scope of the current Task Force, we recommend that this would be a worthwhile exercise of the Film Office. We also note that Vermont's Joint Fiscal Office does not do dynamic modeling of the sort that would provide quantitative results.

We consulted with state legislative economist Tom Kavet, who noted that if specific tax credits are being considered, his office could develop a dynamic modeling approach to study potential net fiscal impacts of various state tax credits. His office would utilize a Vermont regional economic model from REMI (Regional Economic Models, Inc. of Amherst, MA) to estimate economic and demographic impacts from various types of film and media production operations. In order to quantify net fiscal impacts, the data would then be used to run a fiscal model similar to that used in Vermont Economic Progress Council's Vermont Employment Growth Incentive (VEGI) analyses.³⁶

We recommend that the initial functions of a film office be to convene the film and media industry, share resources, produce and manage a robust database, and collaborate with education and training programs. A quantitative cost-benefit analysis is something that could be conducted after such an office has been established for some time, which would then be able to provide data and real measurement.

A more qualitative analysis suggests that film could benefit the Vermont brand and increase tourism. Notably, it may already do this with any film with a Vermont setting, even if not shot in the state. A report from the State of Montana on travel-induced tourism notes the benefits in that state and in other locations around the world and that film and television production can influence travel decisions and help to market and grow local visitor economies. Tourism in Devil's Tower, WY, saw a 75% increase after *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* was filmed there. In Iowa, *The Bridges of Madison County* and *Field of Dreams* have brought lasting increases in tourism. One estimate suggested that 100,000 to 150,000 visitors go to Dyersville, IA and the state's covered bridges annually because of those films. The film *Deliverance* is estimated to bring in \$42 million in tourism spending in Rayburn County, GA where the film is set. This report cites that according to the National Brand Index, 40% of people would be "very likely" to travel to places as a result of seeing the destinations while watching a film.³⁷

Importantly, in order to understand the appropriate investment in the industry, we must understand the industry as it stands today. We have some initial data³⁸, but further research is warranted. One outstanding task as a state then is to define the industry and then quantify it with the appropriate measurement. At a minimum, we recommended that film and media productions register their projects in some way in Vermont, on a volunteer basis, which could be an effective way to begin to track and quantify film and media work that is taking place in the state.

³⁶ Appendix D: Cost-Benefit Study Memorandum

³⁷ The Economic Impact of Montana Film Production: An Analysis of the Industry and the MEDIA Act, 2019-2020, Montana Film Office, June 25, 2022.

https://econsultsolutions.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/EcolImpactMTFilmProdReport_2019-2020.pdf

³⁸ Appendix A: Vermont Film & Media Industry Sector Data

Recommendations and Conclusion

The film, digital and media industry presents a tremendous opportunity for Vermont. Just like the tech sector, or agriculture, or tourism, the film economy, offering jobs and opportunity for all kinds of talent is an economy all its own – if properly nurtured and supported.

What would it take for Vermont to grow its film economy? To be an attractive location for outside film producers and to promote what Vermont has to offer that's unique, that other New England states don't have – our ski resorts and reliable snow falls, our charming historic downtowns, and our rural character – all of which could be a draw for film and television production. Vermont's lifestyle and natural beauty continues to lure creatives. It's a state with a well-established and vibrant creative sector that generates 9.3% of all employment, higher than the national average. Nearly 50% of Vermont's creatives are self-employed or freelance, compared to 40% nationwide.³⁹

Vermont's small size also works to its advantage. There is more flexibility when it comes to working with local towns, police and fire departments to secure permits for a shoot. In Vermont, it's easy to connect to local and state officials. And costs overall are lower. As one example, the 2017 film *The Land* was filmed entirely in Vermont with 89% in-state crew. The four-day shoot realized a 67% savings over going rates in New York and Los Angeles, where based on standard union rates in those states, the production would have cost between \$95,000 and \$120,000. In Vermont, it came in at \$32,261.⁴⁰

Vermont of course has its challenges for filmmakers – lack of affordable housing, skilled workers in the industry, and not enough of a tax base to provide meaningful tax incentives. Pinning all hopes on luring Hollywood productions might be an uphill battle, considering that incentives we might be able to offer could be matched or beaten by nearby states, which is why some have argued for a film office that supports and facilitates Vermont media makers – but why favor one creative discipline over another is a question that has been asked. Productive incentives that work best are the ones that are attuned to the specific characteristics of the state in which they are offered.

Indeed, Vermont's film industry requires a uniquely Vermont-based approach. Some have suggested focusing on short-term commercial productions with a reasonable minimum spend in-state. As one

³⁹ CreateVT Action Plan, p. iv

https://www.vermontartscouncil.org/uploads/Vermont%20Creative%20Network/CreateVT/CreateVT_Action_Plan.pdf

⁴⁰ Brown, T. Vermont Has Film Festivals, but Does It Have a Film Industry? *The Bridge*, Mar 16, 2018. <https://montpelierbridge.org/2018/03/vermont-has-film-festivals-but-does-it-have-a-film-industry/>

example, Massachusetts only requires \$50K to be spent to get a tax break, and the minimum is cumulative for the same client over one year, providing an incentive for producers to return to the state for more than one shoot. Another approach could be a requirement that when a production is supported by state tax credits, they must hire a percentage of in-state crew and have a minimum production spend in the state. Attracting major productions to Vermont will bring in revenue, but there might not be long-term benefits to Vermont's film industry or to Vermont communities if the jobs and people are short-term and leave once the shoot is over.

Establishing a successful film office could be a tremendous advantage. A film office can help filmmakers through red tape, unite the various subsets of the field (video producers, photographers, animators, sound engineers, etc.), and connect them to media programs at schools, production crew and resources, as well as provide sources of public and private funding. A film office often acts as a central hub. A major film being produced in Vermont might require, for example, scouting multiple locations, arranging multiple rental cars, hotel nights, and police escorts. When Dreamworks shot *What Lies Beneath* in Vermont, Bill Stetson recalls having to locate a place where Harrison Ford could land his private helicopter and having to find "the perfect home" for Michele Pfeiffer.

How such an office would be structured needs to be considered. Some states place it under the Economic Development Departments while other states place it under the purview of Arts or Cultural Affairs Departments. In some locations, such as in Oklahoma, Tennessee, Washington, DC, and Seattle, the film office is joined with a dedicated music office as a way to leverage industries that share similar creative synergies for economic benefit. Some efforts have tied the film office to tourism and measure success and reporting through increased hotel nights and rooms and meal taxes. However, this is not always an effective measurement for the locales involved in these industries. Governance and metrics need to be aligned in a way that produces usable data reflecting the health and growth of the community.

The film office should also recognize and appreciate the various subsets of the film industry: the content creators who are working under commission; event/corporate filmmakers and photographers who might be in advertising or the wedding industry; the creative makers who are invested in a personal or art project and perhaps less interested in a financial outcome; the technicians who are hired to complete projects in the film and media industry; the film studios and companies creating episodic and long-form content, not advertising or under commission, working with the intent to sell for profit; and the learners/students who if properly supported will help to grow the industry within the state in the coming years. The people that comprise these groups often intersect. What's important is that the needs of each subset should be identified and supported. A representative from each subset would do well to support a board. While there is substantial overlap in needs across the subsets, each also requires different supports.

A film office needs to be staffed and resourced adequately. It takes staff time to track hotel nights, follow money spent in restaurants, and so forth in order to provide the data needed to demonstrate return on investment. It also takes staff time to support a robust, centralized database – a component that appears

to be of utmost importance to supporting film in Vermont. Investing in a film office needs to be a long-term enterprise. It could be years before Vermont lands a major production. Five years is the time span suggested to get a film office well-established, make enough connections to attract producers, and begin to reliably track the ROI.

There are a wide range of opportunities that exist in the film and media industry, which could be a boon to Vermont. Other models from other states and metropolitan areas for supporting the film and media economy have been explored, and Vermont could build upon those, creating something that's uniquely Vermont. Developing Vermont's film and media ecosystem and economy presents a challenge and could be further explored by a dedicated film office.

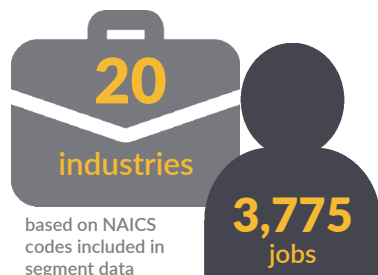
Film & Media



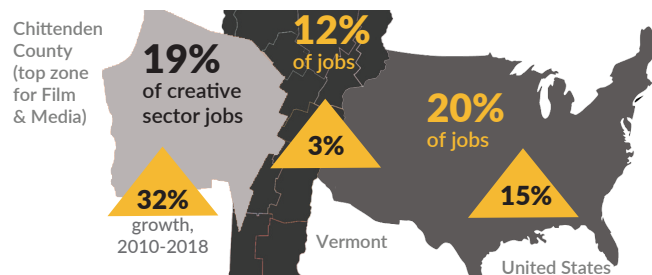
Simpsons Movie Premiere in Springfield. Photo: Victoria Hingston, Flickr Creative Commons

SEGMENT SNAPSHOT

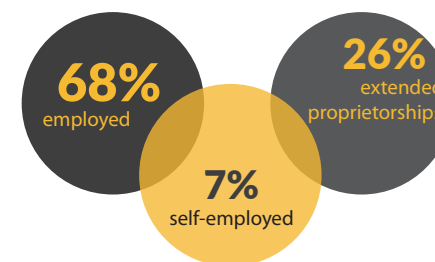
Segment Size



Segment Size & Growth



Type of Employment



CREATIVE SEGMENT ASSESSMENT

Strengths & Opportunities

- Public access television stations exist across the state providing local resources
- Film & Media is among the highest paying and highest grossing creative industries
- Film & Media jobs and activities are growing quickly across the United States
- The Film & Media segment holds strong appeal for younger people with native digital skills
- Film festivals are growing across the state and have a large economic impact for communities
- Fluctuations in the media industry are driving rapid innovation in media and content formats, distribution channels, and payment models

Challenges

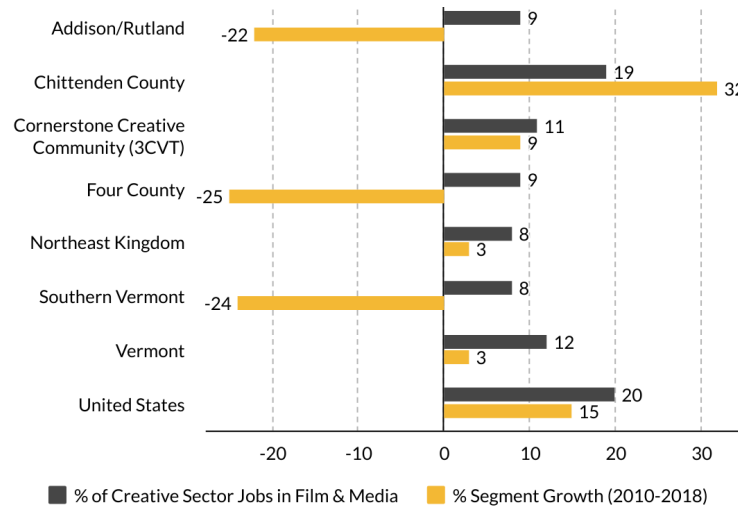
- Relatively small number of Film & Media jobs in Vermont and relatively low segment growth rate, compared to the U.S. as a whole
- Decline in print media and rise of digital media have created significant fluctuation in the sector
- Film & Media jobs and entrepreneurial businesses may have high barriers to entry, often requiring specialized technical training, software and equipment
- Uneven distribution of segment across the state, with strongest concentration in Chittenden County
- Broadband accessibility challenges hinder job growth and consumption, particularly in rural areas
- Gap in state and local economic development programs—no incentives to encourage film and media in Vermont as compared to other states
- No film commission or other body to attract in state film production

Needs

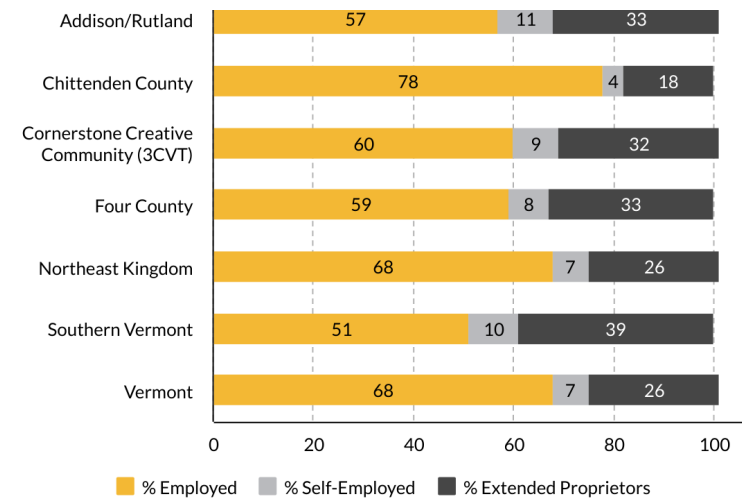
- Statewide broadband development
- Development of sharing systems, libraries and co-working and maker spaces statewide
- Improved access to digital equipment and software
- Increased training and education in digital and media technologies

FILM & MEDIA SEGMENT STATEWIDE






Segment Size & Growth by Zone



Type of Employment by Zone



SEGMENT OCCUPATIONS (NAICS CODES)

| | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---------------------------------------|--|---|
| 334310 Audio and Video Equipment |  | 424920 Book, Periodical and Newspaper Merchant Wholesalers | 451212 News Dealers and Newsstands | 511110 Newspaper Publishers | 512110 Motion Picture and Video Production |
|  | 512120 Motion Picture and Video Distribution |  | | 511210 Software Publishers | 512131 Motion Picture Theaters (except Drive-Ins) |
| 512191 Teleproduction & Other Postproduction Services | 512199 Other Motion Picture and Video Industries | 515111 Radio Networks | 515120 Television Broadcasting | 515210 Cable and Other Subscription Programming |  |
| 519110 News Syndicates | 519130 Internet Publishing & Broadcasting & Web Search Portals |  | 541830 Media Buying Agencies | 541840 Media Representatives | 711510 Independent Artists, Writers, and Performers |

MEDIA RESOURCES & PROVIDERS

- Creative Ground Database
- League of Vermont Writers
- New England Foundation for the Arts
- Vermont Access Network
- Vermont Arts Council
- Vermont Association of Broadcasters
- Vermont Center for Emerging Technologies
- Vermont Community Newspaper Group
- Vermont Folklife Center
- Vermont Press Association
- Vermont Technology Alliance

Appendix B: Film and Digital Media Education and Training Programs in Vermont

Higher Education Programs

Bennington College

Video Studies <https://www.bennington.edu/academics/areas-of-study-curriculum/visual-arts/video>

Castleton College

Cinema Studies Minor <https://www.castleton.edu/academics/undergraduate-programs/cinema-studies-minor/>

Champlain College

Filmmaking Major

<https://www.champlain.edu/academics/undergraduate-academics/majors-and-programs/filmmaking>

Community College of Vermont (12 locations)

Design and Media Studies Associates of Arts Degree

https://catalog.ccv.edu/preview_program.php?catoid=13&poid=579&returnto=1182

Certificate in Digital Media Production

https://catalog.ccv.edu/preview_program.php?catoid=13&poid=583&returnto=1176

Middlebury College

Film and Media Culture

<https://www.middlebury.edu/college/academics/film-media-culture>

Northern Vermont University

Film Studies, minor program

<https://www.northernvermont.edu/degree-programs/film-studies/>

Communications and Journalism, Digital Communications: Cinema concentration

<https://www.northernvermont.edu/degree-programs/digital-communications/cinema/>

Saint Michaels College

Media Studies, Journalism and Digital Arts

<https://www.smcvt.edu/academics/majors-minors-and-curriculum/media-studies-journalism-digital-arts/>

University of Vermont

College of Arts and Sciences, Film and Television Studies Program (part of English department)

<https://www.uvm.edu/cas/filmtv>

Vermont College of Fine Arts

MFA in Film

<https://vcfa.edu/programs/mfa-in-film/>

Semester Cinema

Produced by Kingdom County Productions in partnership with Northern Vermont University, Semester Cinema film intensive is a national program open to college students across the US.

<https://www.semestercinema.org/apply>

High School Programs

2022-23 Digital & Visual Arts Programs Offered to High School Students Through the VT Agency of Education's Vermont Career Technical Education (CTE) Programs

| Center | Program Name |
|------------------|---|
| BTC | Digital Media Lab Design and Illustration |
| CTE Essex | Design and Creative Media Computer Animation and Web Design |
| CVCC | Digital Media Arts |
| Green Mountain | Creative Media Art and Design |
| Hartford | Design, Illustration, Media Arts |
| Lyndon Institute | Graphic Design |
| Northwest | Digital Media |
| P.A. Hannaford | Visual Communications Design & Illustration Addison Repertory Theatre |
| Randolph | Digital Filmmaking |
| River Bend | 21 st Century Media and Design |

River Valley

Audio Video Production

Stafford

Digital Arts
Video Communications

Windham

Filmmaking

Growing Vermont's Filmmaking Economy

**Prepared by Ben Barry for the House Committee on Commerce and Economic
Development
March 3, 2022**

Introduction

S.263, the Vermont Senate's Omnibus Economic Development bill, includes language to restart the Vermont Film Commission, which has been dormant for nearly a decade. If passed, the bill tasks VFC with promoting Vermont as a location for commercial film production and "develop[ing] and support[ing] a thriving Vermont film sector." The commission is also tasked with raising the funds to execute these tasks. The commission is also required to submit a report to the legislature by January 15, 2023 with recommendations on how to nurture a successful film industry in Vermont. Though that report will doubtless be more in-depth, it may be useful to take a brief look at what happened to Vermont's original film commission, what other states are doing to promote their film economies, and how much success they have had in doing so.

There is a clear consensus regarding what the two main aspects of a state film economy are: film commissions and tax incentives. As such, these will be the focus of this report, which will take a 30,000 foot view of the landscape for developing film economies. Hopefully, this broad overview will inform the potential decision to restart the Vermont Film Commission, and shine a light on what it may be able to accomplish for Vermont's economy.

1. History of the Vermont Film Economy

The Vermont Film Commission¹²

The Vermont Film Commission was established in 1995 via legislation to "promote Vermont as a location for commercial film and television production

¹ <https://vermonthistory.org/documents/findaid/VermontFilmCommission.pdf>

²

<https://www.sevendaysvt.com/vermont/say-good-bye-to-the-vt-film-commission-hello-to-the-creative-economy/Content?oid=2142767>

and to facilitate the participation of local individuals in such productions” as a subset of the Vermont Department of Tourism and Marketing. Unfortunately, filmmakers noted several issues with the VFC (x,y,z). VFC was then rolled into the Office of Creative Economy in 2011, essentially killing the agency.

Why did the commission die? In short, it had become entirely ineffective at accomplishing its mission. Budget cuts led to the commission only having one full-time employee, its executive director, whom Vermont filmmakers deemed unable to run the VFC effectively. The executive director, Joe Bookchin, stressed that a lack of administrative staff made it difficult to fully accomplish the commission’s goals. VFC was not reaching out to filmmakers enough, spearheading a robust marketing effort, or being a helpful source for filmmakers in Vermont. And so, the concentrated effort to cultivate a film economy in Vermont stalled out, shelving a good-faith attempt to bring jobs and widespread economic activity to Vermont.

Tax Incentives in Vermont³

Vermont has previously allowed tax incentives related to film production, but both have expired. The first, the Movie Production Tax Credit, “allowed nonresidents to take a credit against income they receive for a dramatic performance in a commercial film production during that tax year.” This credit lasted from 1998 to 2012. The second, the Vermont Film Production Incentive, “provided grants to cover certain production expenses incurred on Vermont film productions.” The active dates for this incentive is unknown, but it is currently not being offered.

2. What Other States Are Doing

States with No State Film Office/Commission⁴

- Alaska
- Delaware
- Vermont
- Wisconsin

³ Bloomberg BNA Tax Database

⁴ <https://www.sagindie.org/resources/states/>

States with No Active Tax Incentives⁵

(Bold indicates states that also have no state film office/commission)

- Alabama
- **Alaska**
- Arizona
- Colorado
- **Delaware**
- Washington, D.C.
- Florida
- Idaho
- Indiana
- Iowa
- Kansas
- Michigan
- Minnesota
- Missouri
- Nebraska
- New Hampshire
- North Carolina
- North Dakota
- South Dakota
- Texas
- **Vermont**
- Washington
- West Virginia
- **Wisconsin**
- Wyoming

⁵ Bloomberg BNA Tax Database

Regional Competition: A Look Around New England

Vermont's three closest neighbors in New England— Maine, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts— offer a similar northeastern beauty for films to capture, but all have approached the film economy rather differently. Maine and New Hampshire, boasting a small and rural population, offer the most similar environment to Vermont. Of those two, Maine is slightly more active in developing its film economy, offering a small tax incentive that pales in comparison to Massachusetts. Massachusetts' larger population and significant metropolitan area have allowed it to make a more robust effort to develop of a film economy.

Maine

Film Commission⁶: Maine has an 11-member film commission within the Office of Tourism tasked with promoting the state as a production location and raising the funds to do so.

Tax Incentives⁷: The Visual Media Production Credit is “available to qualified production companies that conducted certified media productions in Maine.” The credit is 5% of expenses incurred for productions over \$75,000.

New Hampshire

Film Commission⁸: New Hampshire's Film Bureau assists filmmakers with production within the state, but it is facing similar problems to Vermont's original film commission and is in danger of closing.

Tax Incentives⁹: None.

Massachusetts

⁶ National Conference of State Legislatures: “Select State Film Commissions”

⁷ Bloomberg BNA Tax Database; <https://legislature.maine.gov/statutes/36/title36sec5219-Y.html>

⁸

https://www.eagletimes.com/news/proposed-office-closure-leaves-future-of-nh-film-industry-in-limbo/article_e3306fde-78bf-5927-845f-08e9680f9140.html

⁹ Bloomberg BNA Tax Database

Film Commission¹⁰: Massachusetts offers a robust film commission that promotes the state to filmmakers and provides them with the resources to operate effectively within the state. They offer a wealth of resources on an easily accessible website.

Tax Incentives¹¹: The Payroll Credit offers “credit for the employment of persons within Massachusetts in connection with the filming and production of a motion picture.” The credit is 25% of the “total qualifying aggregate payroll of the motion picture.” The Production Expense Credit offers “credit equal to 25% of its Massachusetts production expenses, not including the qualifying aggregate payroll expenses included in the calculation of the taxpayer's payroll credit.”

3. Returns on Investment: How Well Incentives Work for States

A few studies have been conducted to determine the return-on-investment that tax incentive programs provide. Of course, these are all in states with much larger film economies than Vermont would likely be able to cultivate. But they nonetheless provide insight into the effectiveness of providing strong incentive for film productions to operate within a state at sustained levels.

In California, researchers determined that “the benefits are small relative to the subsidies’ cost.” In short, they determined that there are other factors that may determine whether or not a production operates within their state “such as the growth of the U.S. economy and technological changes.” Thus, their program was costing the state more than it was producing in economic benefit because productions may have just operated within the state regardless due to those other factors.¹²

Georgia’s report was similarly cautious, saying that the benefits had been “overstated” and warned about lost state revenue, the benefits provided to residents of

¹⁰ <https://mafilm.org/>

¹¹ Bloomberg BNA Tax Database

¹² <https://lao.ca.gov/LAOEconTax/Article/Detail/388>

other states, and the lack of direct impact that credits had on generating jobs within the film industry.¹³

Pennsylvania also raised concerns about their program. Though they note an ROI of 13.1 cents for every tax credit dollar, they cautioned that direct impacts on the economy are difficult to measure. They also noted how the film industry is dominated by California, New York, and Georgia, and that competition is difficult against states where production companies have “invested significant resources and established a long-term presence.”¹⁴

Meanwhile, the numbers from Florida have found a positive ROI for their program, which offers both incentives and sales tax exemptions for productions.¹⁵ Massachusetts’ report also found a net gain for its economy.¹⁶

Overall, the results are mixed and even when there is a positive return on investment, the relationship between a robust tax incentive program and positive economic benefits for a state writ large is murky at best.

Conclusion

Developing a film economy in a technological age where Vermont’s natural beauty can be replicated on a soundstage in California, or a similar looking town in Massachusetts is incredibly difficult. The ways in which Vermont could engage in such development are necessarily complicated, and would be much better addressed by a more comprehensive report as dictated in S.263. Nonetheless, a brief view of the landscape for film economies finds that without a film commission there is no legitimate state effort to grow its film economy. These commissions are necessary to help filmmakers through red tape and act as a central hub connecting productions to workers and resources. But, as we have seen in Vermont, and may see again in New Hampshire, a film commission that does not operate effectively is doomed for failure.

¹³

https://www.ncsl.org/Portals/1/Documents/fiscal/evaluation_database/ImpactoftheGeorgiaFilmTaxCredit.pdf

¹⁴ https://www.pafia.org/resources/Documents/TC_2019_Film_Production_Tax_Credit_Report.pdf

¹⁵ <http://edr.state.fl.us/Content/returnoninvestment/EntertainmentIndustryIncentivePrograms2021.pdf>

¹⁶

https://www.ncsl.org/Portals/1/Documents/fiscal/evaluation_database/ReportontheImpactofMassachusettsFilmIndustryTaxIncentivesthroughCalendarYear2016.pdf

Tax incentives are not currently being considered as part of the effort to restart VFC, but they merit some consideration. In conjunction with an effective film commission, some light incentives may provide an extra boost for attracting productions to Vermont, but their impact is uncertain and probably do not warrant a heavy investment. A more in-depth study into the non-tax-incentive factors that drive production within a state would be beneficial. For example, how could Vermont help production companies create a home within the state? Could the state invest in resources like sound stages or other facilities attractive to filmmakers?

Vermont remains as only a handful of states that offer neither a film commission or tax incentives. The state has an interest in getting filmmakers and their crews to spend within the state without either of these programs.

Appendix E. Stakeholders Consulted

Jon Andrew, former advisor, VT Office of Creative Economy
Nathan Beaman, CEO, Urban Rhino production company, Essex, VT
Ryan Broussard, VP of Sales and Production Incentives, Media Services
Tim Clark, Buffalo Niagara Film Office and former executive director of the Association of Film Commissioners International (AFCI)
Jay Craven, Kingdom County Productions
Chad Ervin, CEO, Well Told Films, Vermont Production Collective
Steven Feinberg, Executive Director, Rhode Island Film & Television Office
Scott Finn, CEO, Vermont Public
Liz Gilman, Iowa State Office of Media Production
Jim Lockridge, Big Heavy World, VT
Margot Zalkind Mayor, Newfane VT, former Vermont Film Institute
Joshua Sherman, CEO, Old Mill Road Media, East Arlington, VT
Shayna Sherwood, Vermont-based casting director
Bill Stetson, founder and board president, former Vermont Film Commission
Van Dora Williams, professor, Communications and Creative Media, Champlain College



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Memorandum

To: Sen. Randy Brock and Sen. Stephanie Jerome
From: Tom Kavet
CC: Catherine Benham, Pat Titterton, Joint Fiscal Office; Nic Rockler
Date: December 20, 2022
Re: Film & Media Task Force Discussion Follow-Up

Per our conversation on December 2nd, I am writing to outline a dynamic modelling approach to study potential net fiscal impacts from various state tax credits that may be employed to encourage local film production. I have also attached a memo written by Dr. Rockler in 2005 that was mentioned in the conversation and is an example of this type of modelling. Although it did not extend the analysis to specific tax credits (since none were proposed) nor full measurement of State net fiscal impacts, it provides an analytic framework that would be similar to any dynamic modelling approach. If/when specific tax credits are being considered, something like this could be used to estimate net fiscal impacts.

Such an analysis would probably utilize a Vermont regional economic model from REMI (Regional Economic Models, Inc. of Amherst, MA) to estimate economic and demographic impacts from various types of film and media production operations. These impacts would then be used to run a fiscal model similar to that used in VEPV/VEGI analyses in order to quantify net fiscal impacts.

As discussed, there are many studies in circulation on this topic, as state film credits proliferate and a cottage industry of promotional lobbyists and consultants grows in tandem. Despite the biased analyses that are often associated with such promotional efforts, there are also many academic, government and other analyses that are credible and of value in considering this issue. Most indicate the difficulty of establishing incentives that are sufficiently large to entice production activities to leave states with long-standing and generous public subsidies and/or expansive extant film production infrastructure and support industries. For a small state like Vermont, these competitive hurdles may be especially formidable to surmount. Because of this, other approaches to maximizing film production in the State may also be worth pursuing, such as those we discussed regarding synergies with film and video programs at State colleges and universities.

We are also reviewing other economic data that may reveal the time and expense involved in growing a more expansive year-round film industry in the State through study of other states that have implemented various tax credits, loans and grants to incent local film production over the past 30 years. As this information is compiled and analyzed, we will keep you posted.

In the interim, if you believe some form of tax credits may be something the Task Force and/or legislature would like to implement, we would be happy to prepare estimates of the cost and time necessary for an expanded dynamic analysis consistent with various specific tax proposals.

Memorandum

To: Steve Klein, Chief Fiscal Officer, Vermont Legislative Joint Fiscal Office
From: Nicolas Rockler
CC: Danis Regal, VT Film Commission, Sen. Miller, Sen. Illuzzi, Tom Kavet, JFO Staff
Date: April 26, 2005
Re: Economic Impacts of Major Film Production in Vermont

Steve,

We have completed initial economic impact estimates associated with two large sample motion picture productions in Vermont. These results are intended to provide order of magnitude estimates of the economic impact of this type of film production so as to allow further analysis of potential fiscal impacts that may guide development of additional incentives that may attract filmmakers to the State.

We analyzed estimates for the impacts of two different films' location shooting expenditures derived from budgets for actual movies (filmed or to be filmed elsewhere), known here as "Prison Fish" and "Mumford." The films would have Vermont expenditures of \$12.9 million and \$23.5 million, respectively, differing not only in scale but composition of labor-related and other expenditures.

We present results obtained from the most recent REMI model, REMI V6.0 (NAICS classified industries.)¹ Our estimates used the following types of information:

- Motion picture industry sales of output
- Motion picture industry wages
- Hotel & motel industry sales
- Nullified induced investment

¹ We also performed several simulations using REMI 5.4, the 53-sector SIC defined industries model now used in the VEPC cost-benefit model. The motion picture producing industry is better defined under the NAICS definition in so much as it does not include video rental services within the same category, but overall economic impacts between the two REMI model versions were similar.

We also analyzed detailed film budgets provided by the Vermont Film Commission that were far more specific than the above categories, however, the results did not justify the additional time and effort involved. Use of the detailed film budgets yielded only marginally different estimates from the use of more aggregated REMI categories listed above.²

For comparative purposes, we also simulated the economic impacts of an increase in machinery manufacturing output of \$23.5 million, nullifying any induced investment that would alter production capacities (and hence, changes in relative prices and level of self-supplied output in a later period.) Results from these simulations are shown in Table 1 below.

**TABLE 1
ECONOMIC IMPACT SUMMARY
TWO FILMS AND HYPOTHETICAL MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY OUTPUT
INCREASE**

| Annual Impact Associated with: | "Prison Fish" | "Mumford" | Hypothetical Increase in Machinery Manufacturing |
|---|----------------------|------------------|---|
| Size of Direct Impact | \$12.9 million | \$23.5 million | \$23.5 million |
| Wages and Fringes | \$4.6 million | \$14.8 million | \$5.5 million |
| 2005-2009 Change in: Gross State Product (\$ mil.) | 10.5 | 21.4 | 13.1 |
| Total Employment | 269.5 | 550.8 | 196.1 |
| Personal Income (\$ mil.) | 11.3 | 28.0 | 8.7 |
| Average Wage Rate-New Jobs | \$40,520 | \$50,341 | \$38,262 |
| Average State Wage Rate-Existing Jobs | \$25,261 | \$25,261 | \$25,261 |

Source: Kavet and Rockler using the REMI Model

Large movie production activity in Vermont would have large relative employment and income impacts, primarily due to its labor intensiveness and high relative wages. The impacts, however, are short-lived. Unlike manufacturing output growth, such as that included in the above table, the temporary nature of film production creates benefits that largely expire at the conclusion of the production activity. Impacts in subsequent years are actually slightly negative, and should be considered as a part of any net fiscal impacts.

The Mumford film, for example, has such a high labor intensity that nearly two-thirds of its total budget is consumed with wage and fringe payments - approximately \$15 million. This results in an average wage of all jobs created during filming (and up to 5 years thereafter) of approximately \$50,000 per year.

Prison Fish, too, exhibits high labor-wage intensity, with about one-third of its total budget in the form of wages and fringes, generating jobs paying \$40,500 per year. In contrast, machinery manufacturing, long viewed as a source of “good jobs and good wages” in the State, generates jobs paying less than either film, approximately \$38,000 per year, largely due to its lower (and more usual) wage bill as a fraction of overall production costs. Because filmmaking’s large personal income effects flow to purchases of goods and services as opposed to capital goods, the State’s service industries would also benefit from local expenditures. This drives-up the impacts on State gross state product and personal income relative to the size of the direct effects, and again, impacts compare favorably against those of machinery manufacturing – except that the beneficial impacts are short-lived (see Figures 1-3).

One evident benefit of film-making is the impact on state transfer payments. These payments, of which a sizeable portion consists of state-paid unemployment compensation and related support payments, fall initially and then rise slightly over the next four years. On balance, both films *reduce* transfer payments ranging from about \$700,000 to more than \$1 million, a part of which are costs avoided by the State.¹

In contrast, a one-time increase in manufacturing output of a size similar to that of Mumford results in virtually no change in transfer payments. The slight initial decline in payments is balanced by an almost equal increase over the next several years. From the State’s perspective, increased output may provide only transitory improvements in State transfer payments and depend on the specific industry in which the improvements originate.

Further research is necessary to estimate net fiscal impacts from films such as those analyzed, however, it is likely that net fiscal benefits would not be less than about 5%

¹ Other components of these transfer payments include old age and survivor benefits, veterans benefits, medicare, and family aid. The amount of these payments is not likely to be altered by filmmaking activity.

of total Vermont expenditures. For the “Prison Fish” and “Mumford” films, this would imply fiscal benefits to the State that are approximately \$650,000 and \$1.2 million. This could change substantially if the composition of direct expenditures of any particular film departs from the range given by our two sample points.

At this point, the beneficial impact from reduced transfer payments, as well as job growth and personal income growth are all favorable economic impacts from filmmaking. To generate consistent and more precise overall fiscal impacts, we recommend that the REMI output generated as a part of this analysis be input to the fiscal impact component of the VEPC cost-benefit model run by Economic and Policy Resources for a multiyear period following the direct impacts. This will allow better estimates of maximum State incentives before the State risks offering more that it would cost once filming is completed.

Since these economic benefits are temporary, the State must also determine the portion of net fiscal benefits it wishes to or needs to expend in order to be competitive in this sector. Unlike VEPC-type incentives, for which benefits are expected to persist beyond the award period and theoretically yield net positive long term fiscal impacts to the State, any positive State fiscal return from a film production incentive would need to be immediate.

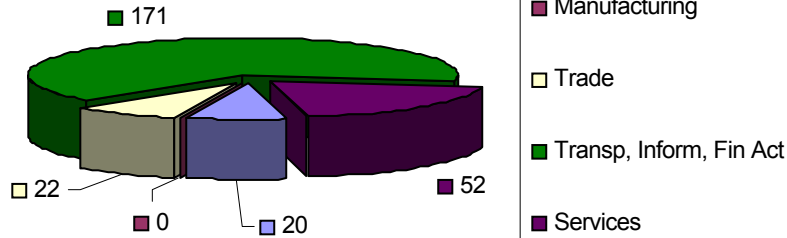
It should be noted that we nullified investment related impacts based on induced spending from filmmaking. This basically fixes capacity to that which is present at the time filming begins (2005 as hypothesized here), which seems reasonable for a small number of movie projects. If, however, new incentives prove sufficiently attractive to cause a sizeable increase in filmmaking and related support activity, the economics of film production could shift in ways that both make the State more attractive from the standpoint of relative production cost, and reduce the incentive needed to attract filmmakers. We did not estimate relative production cost change impacts at this time, but are prepared to do so if activity increases in measurable fashion or if anyone would like to assume this at some time in the future.

Based on this analysis, it is clear that large film production activities can generate substantial economic benefits in the form of high paying jobs and related in-State expenditures. Most of the jobs, however, are temporary and expire at the conclusion of the film production activity. The temporary nature of this type of economic activity presents challenges in estimating net fiscal benefits and sizing maximum incentives that may be offered. Further research is necessary to establish precise incentive thresholds that can be of net benefit to the State.

If you or others have any questions or are interested in any of the voluminous tables of impact estimates generated by REMI, please contact me or Tom Kavet.

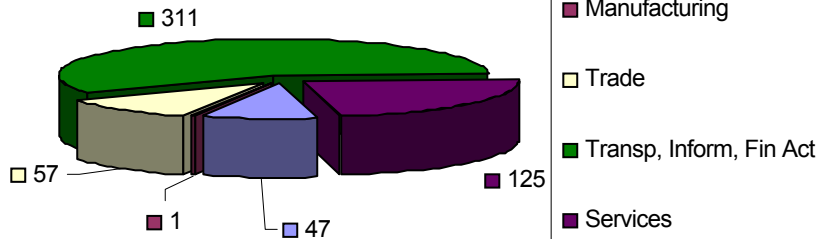
**Figure 1 - Economic Impact by Industry Group:
Net Jobs Created 2005-2009**

("Prison Fish" \$12.9 mil.)



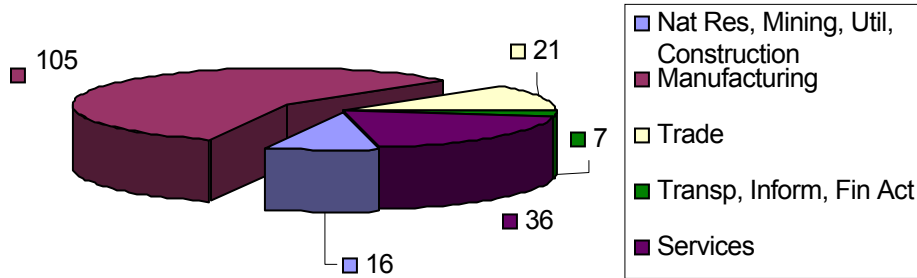
**Figure 2 - Economic Impact by Industry Group:
Net Jobs Created 2005-2009**

("Mumford" \$23.5 mil.)



**Figure 3 - Economic Impact by Industry Group:
Net Jobs Created 2005-2009**

(Machinery Manufacturing Increase \$23.5 mil.)



Appendix F. RELATED LINKS

Tax Incentives

An overview of current state tax incentives by the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) <https://www.ncsl.org/research/fiscal-policy/film-tax-incentives-back-in-the-spotlight.aspx>

Economic impact report from the Maine Film Association: <https://www.maineilm.org/eco-impact-report/>

Rhode Island Film & Television, Regional Economic and Potential Tourism Impacts in Rhode Island of NOS4A2 and The Gilded Age
http://www.film.ri.gov//documents/RIRegionalEconomicsandTourismofFilmandTV_3.22.22.pptx

Interactive US Map of States' Production Incentives
<https://www.mediaservices.com/production-incentives/production-incentives-interactive-map/>

Selected States/Cities Film Offices

Iowa State Office of Media Production <https://iowaculture.gov/media>

Maine Film Association <https://www.maineilm.org/>

Massachusetts Film Office <https://mafilm.org/>

New Hampshire Film Bureau <https://www.visitnh.gov/film>

New Jersey Motion Picture & Television Commission <https://nj.gov/state/njfilm/>

Local & Regional Film Offices in New York State <https://esd.ny.gov/local-regional-film-offices-new-york-state>

Rhode Island Film and Television Office, <http://www.film.ri.gov/> - the “Cadillac version” of a state film office

Selected State-Funded Offices That Combine Film and Music

[Oklahoma](https://okfilmmusic.org/) <https://okfilmmusic.org/>

[Tennessee](https://www.tnentertainment.com/) <https://www.tnentertainment.com/>

[Washington, D.C.](https://entertainment.dc.gov/) <https://entertainment.dc.gov/>

[Seattle](https://www.seattle.gov/filmandmusic) <https://www.seattle.gov/filmandmusic>

Vermont Media Production Networks

JAM Junction Arts & Media

A 501(c)3 community-building organization that enables open public dialogue, expression, and government transparency by providing access to the expanding world of media, serving the towns of Hartford, Hartland and Norwich, VT and Hanover and Lebanon, NH

<https://uvjam.org/>

ORCA Media

Provides free video production, training and distribution services to citizens and organizations in the 13 Central Vermont towns served

<https://www.orcamedia.net/>

Vermont Production Collective

A grassroots organization connecting the film, video, photography, sound, and graphics industries in Vermont

<https://vtproductioncollective.com/>

Media Factory in Burlington is a community media center advancing free and open media, civic engagement, and government transparency through radio, live tv, podcasts, training, and other programs.

<https://www.mediafactory.org/>

Other Resources

Association of Film Commissioners International (AFCI) <https://afci.org/>

Vermont Association of Broadcasters (VAB) <https://vab.org/home/>

Vermont Access Network (VAN), connects 24 Community Media Centers that together operate 81 local cable channels across Vermont <https://vermontaccess.net/vermont-access-network/>